

PLUCK AND LUCK

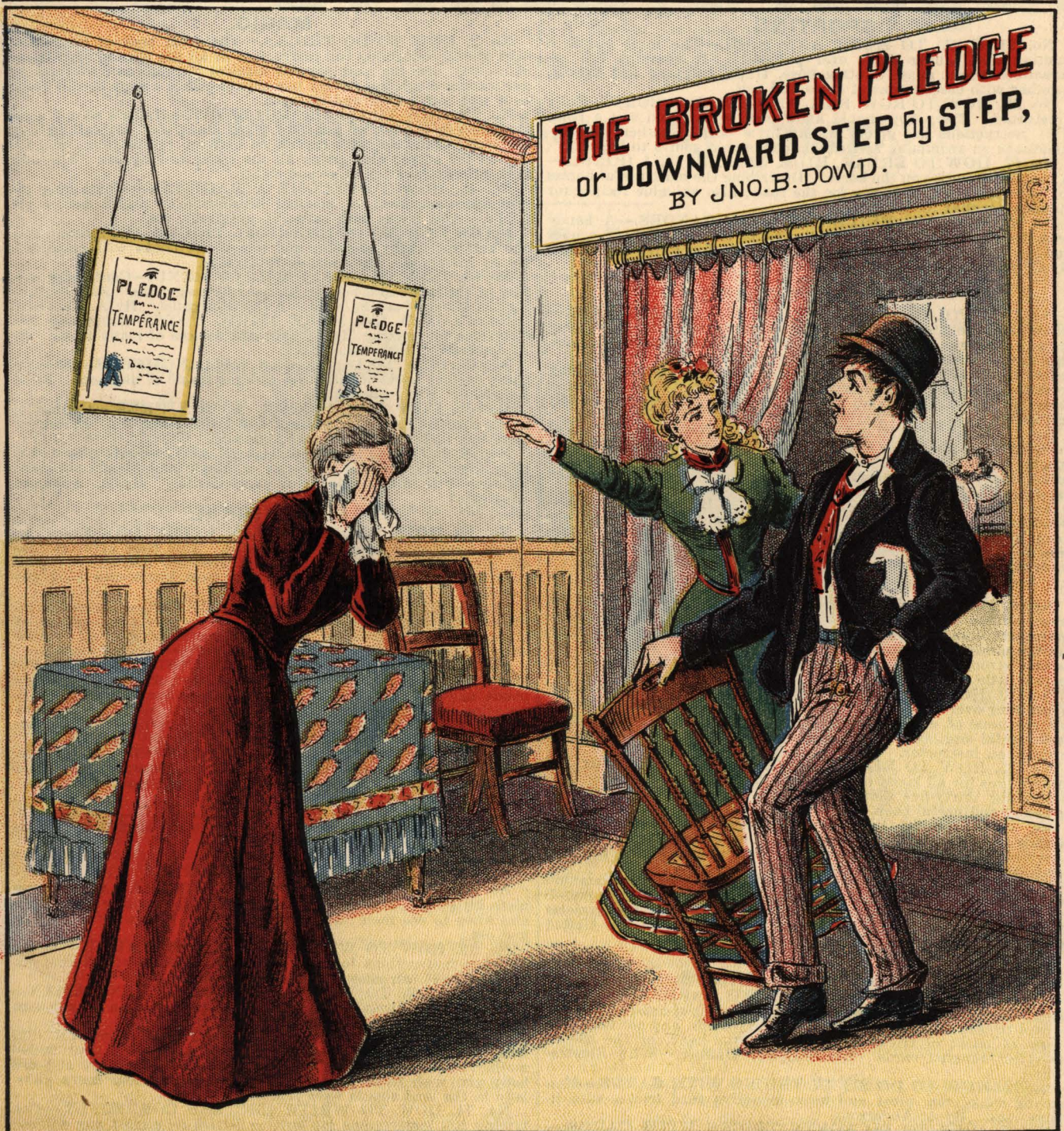
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Nettie led him before the pledge. "You have broken father's heart by what you have done this night. Here, look at this. Read it, Willie Waterman, and blush for very shame."

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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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NEW YORK, June 27, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.

The Broken Pledge;

OR,

Downward, Step by Step.

By JNO. B. DOWD.

CHAPTER I.

THE WATERMANS IN HARD LUCK.

In the village of Redfern, not a hundred miles from New York, lived the family of John Waterman.

The family consisted of four persons—all adults.

At least, the two younger ones were no longer children.

John Waterman, the father, had once been a prosperous merchant.

But financial misfortunes came, and in a single day the panic swept his fortune from his grasp.

Like the honest man he was, he gave up everything to his creditors and started at the bottom of the ladder again.

But he was now too old to make another fortune.

The struggle was too hard for him.

One of his wealthy friends owned a large factory in the village of Redfern.

He offered him a position in it, which he gladly accepted, and the family moved out there.

His good wife did all her own work, assisted by Nettie, her only daughter, then just budding into sweet sixteen.

Willie, the only son, then eighteen years of age, sought work in the village machine shop, and obtained it.

Two years passed, during which time the wages earned by both father and son scarcely sufficed to make both ends meet.

House rent, food and clothing seemed very dear to them when so little was earned.

But one day John Waterman was stricken down at his desk in the factory with partial paralysis and was conveyed to his humble home by some of the operatives.

The village physician was called, who said that he would never walk again.

"His left side is paralyzed," he said "and I know no cure for it in one of his age."

It was a terrible blow to all of them. The wife and mother felt it more than the others.

She remembered what an active, handsome man he had been and what a good provider he was in the days of his manhood. The change now came near breaking her heart.

Willie and Nettie wept tears of bitter sorrow for their dear old father, for they loved him dearly. He had been kind and just to them in all things.

"Brother," said Nettie to her brother, "I am going to ask for work in the factory."

"Don't you do it, sister," he said. "I can earn enough to take care of the family."

"Indeed you cannot, brother. Even with papa's salary we could hardly get along."

"But they are going to raise my wages at the shop," said Willie. "I am reckoned as good as any workman there now. I've been learning fast during the time I've been there."

"I know you have, brother," said Nettie, "but it won't do for me to stay at home now and let you do all the work. I can earn three or four dollars per week in the factory, and that is almost a fortune to us now."

"Yes, I know that; but I hate to have you go into the factory," said Willie, who was very proud of his beautiful sister.

But Nettie had her own way, and secured a place in the factory, where she regularly earned four dollars per week.

Nettie and Willie thus became the bread-winners of the family, and brave, faithful workers they were.

Mrs. Waterman devoted her whole time to nursing her husband and taking care of the house.

But by and by hard times came and work was slack.

Then the Watermans had to leave their cottage and go into two rooms in a rickety old tenement because they were not able to pay the rent.

Nettie shed tears over the change, as was quite natural; but the mother bore up patiently and kept the two rooms sweet and clean all the time.

Before the change came, however, Willie and Nettie had joined a temperance club in the village.

Both of them had fine voices, and their good conversational powers made them general favorites with all the members.

To each member was given a beautifully written and printed pledge, to be framed and hung up in their homes.

Nettie framed and hung both hers and Willie's in their little home, where they could be seen at all times.

But one day Nettie saw her brother exposed to a great temptation to drink. He resisted, but had she not been present to encourage him she was confident he would have fallen.

After that she kept up his interest in the organization to such an extent that she was sure he would not forget himself even when exposed to temptation.

One evening the brother and sister came in from work together.

They were in high spirits, for they brought their wages home.

Both of them ran up and kissed their mother, placing their week's wages in her hand.

Then they went to their invalid father's bedside and kissed him with a tenderness that brought tears to his eyes.

"How do you feel this evening, father?" Willie asked, as he held his parent's hand in his.

"I am easy, my son," was the feeble reply, "but I am no better."

"But you are no worse, father," said Willie, "and for that we ought to be thankful."

"Yes," said Nettie. "I thank God every time I come in and find that you are no worse, father."

"But I am helpless—tied down to this bed and not able to do a thing to help you all along."

"Oh, that should not trouble you, father," said Nettie. "You don't know how happy we all are that we are able to work for you who have done so much for us."

"But I want to help you all," protested the father.

"We know that well enough, father," said Willie; "but, as you can't, let us have the pleasure of working for you. You don't know how happy I feel when at my work I think of you and mother, and know that I will have wages coming to me at the end of the week that will enable me to buy medicine and food for both of you."

"Let us thank God, John," said Mrs. Waterman, coming forward and throwing her arms around his neck, "that we have two such children whose work is a work of love."

"Yes, indeed," said the father. "I ought not to complain. I even try to be thankful."

"Come, dears," said the mother. "Tea is ready," and she led the way to the table in the center of the room, on which was their frugal meal.

Willie and Nettie sat down to the table with its snowy linen and bright cups and plates.

Mrs. Waterman invoked a Divine blessing on all, and then Nettie carried the tea and toast which had been prepared for him to her father.

It was a beautiful, home-like picture, humble though it was. What a pity such cannot be said of every home in the land!

"I think you ought to stick a feather in my pledge up there, sis," said Willie, looking up at his pledge as it hung on the wall over the mantel.

"Why, brother?" Nettie asked.

"Because I was urged harder to-day to take a drink of wine than I ever was before."

"Why, who urged you so hard?"

"Can you guess?"

"No; I am not good at guessing."

"Well, it was Henry Pelham."

Nettie almost sprang to her feet in her astonishment.

"Did he ever ask you to drink with him before?" she asked.

"Twice before, but each time I declined. I don't understand why he, a rich man, should want a poor young mechanic to drink with him."

There was a very serious look on Nettie's face, which her mother did not fail to notice.

"I don't understand it, either," said Nettie. "He has been trying to make love to me, but I would not listen to him. Yesterday he wanted to walk home with me, but I would not let him."

"Pelham is a good sort of a fellow," remarked Willie, "and prides himself on being a masher. Keep him at his distance, sis, and let him know that he can't mash you. You can do that without giving any very great offense."

"I shall try not to give offense," Nettie said, "for I don't wish to offend any one."

The meal over, Nellie sat down by the bedside and read to her father till he fell asleep, whilst Willie went out for a stroll.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD MESMERIST—WILLIE WATERMAN BREAKS HIS PLEDGE.

A few days after the conversation recorded in the previous chapter Nellie was going home from the factory alone by herself.

A couple of blocks from her humble quarters she was met by Henry Pelham, the junior partner and one of the owners of the mill.

He tipped his hat and made a very profound bow.

"You are going home all alone, Miss Nettie," he said.

"So I am," she replied; "but I am not at all lonely."

"I hope you are not so unkind as to refuse me the pleasure of accompanying you to your door?"

"The unkindness is wholly on your part," said Nettie, "for you will subject me to a great deal of gossip and uncomplimentary comments."

With that Nettie bowed very respectfully and tripped on her way homeward.

"That is very well, my proud beauty," said Pelham, gazing after the departing girl. "That kind of reasoning may be sat-

isfactory to you, but it is not to me. You haven't felt the pangs of poverty enough yet, but you will soon. I'll first turn my attention to that brother of yours, and when I have him in my power, you will be willing enough to listen to me then."

With that the young man turned and walked down the main street of the village.

On the way he met Willie Waterman and Ben Morgan.

"Hallo, boys!" he said; "where are you going?"

"I am going home to wash up and change my clothes," said Willie.

"Come down to the Village House after supper," said Pelham. "There is a strange character stopping there, and he has enough eccentricity in him for a week's amusement."

"All right," said Willie. "I'll be around in about an hour."

"So will I," said Ben.

Later in the evening half a dozen young men assembled at the hotel, and were seated on the piazza, where Henry Pelham joined them.

"Have you seen the old fellow yet?" he asked of Ben Morgan.

"What old fellow?" Ben asked.

"Why, the old man I was telling you about. He is the best mesmerist I ever saw, and last night he had half a dozen boys making fools of themselves in the barroom."

"Now, that's something I would really like to see," said Willie. "What is the old man's name?"

"He says that his name is Jones, but that when he was traveling professionally years ago he was billed as 'Professor Johannes.' If you speak to him to-night you must be sure to call him 'Professor.'"

"He is a broken-down performer, then, I guess," said Willie.

"I think so," replied Pelham. "He has a nose on him like a boiled lobster. So I think whisky has been his ruin. Ah, there he is now!" and the party of young men peered into the barroom of the village tavern at an old man who was smoking a pipe.

He was rather seedy-looking, and his face indicated a career of dissipation, yet there was an expression of conscious power about it which did not escape the notice of the young men.

As they were gazing at him the stranger came out on the piazza, when Pelham called out:

"How are you, professor?"

"I am all right," replied the professor. "How is it with you?"

"I am in the same happy condition, thank you," Pelham replied, offering the old man a chair.

After some little further conversation the professor suddenly turned to Morgan and with a startling earnestness told him the chair he was sitting on was red-hot.

Morgan bounded from the chair with a yell, rubbing the seat of his pants as though he had been pretty well blistered.

The others of the party burst into a roar of laughter, but Morgan stood still, glaring at the chair and rubbing himself.

"It was pretty hot, wasn't it?" the professor asked.

"Yes," replied Ben; "it was red-hot."

"Oh, that's too thin!" exclaimed Willie.

"What's too thin?" the old professor asked.

"Oh, all that chin-music about the hot chair."

"Young man," said the professor, sternly, "it isn't half as hot as the one you are sitting on."

Willie gazed up at him in a dazed sort of way, but made no reply.

Suddenly the professor exclaimed:

"Your chair is red-hot and burning your clothes!"

Willie sprang about five feet in the air and began rubbing himself vigorously, as if he believed his clothes were on fire.

The party roared with laughter.

"Ah! it's hot, isn't it?" the professor asked Willie.

"Yes, it is."

"Feel of it and see if it is hot yet."

Willie caught hold of the chair very tenderly, but let go of it very quickly.

"Hot, is it?"

"Yes."

"I say, professor," said Pelham, "come in and let's have a drink, and make those two fellows come in with us."

"All right," replied the old man, and then, turning to the two victims of mesmerism, he said to them:

"You are very thirsty—come and have a drink."

Ben and Willie hastened into the barroom with all the eagerness of old toppers.

The professor called for whisky for himself and his two subjects, whilst the others took such drinks as they wanted.

Much to the surprise of several persons in the barroom, Willie Waterman stood up to the bar and drank a copious draught of whisky.

"Ah!" said Pelham, in an undertone, as he put down his empty glass, "he's broken that pledge at last."

A few minutes later Pelham sang out:

"Let's have another drink!"

"Barkis is willin'," said the professor.

"Who's 'Barkis'?" one of them asked.

"That's my name whenever anybody asks me to take a drink," the old man replied.

A second drink was taken, and then Pelham called for more feats of mesmerism.

The professor set Morgan to dancing and Willie to singing a song.

Of course everybody passing within hearing came in to see what was going on.

Among the spectators were several members of the temperance society to which Willie belonged.

They were shocked beyond measure at what they saw.

One of them spoke to him but received no answer.

"Professor," said Pelham, "break the spell on him and let us see what he will do."

The professor caught him by the shoulder, shook him two or three times and called out:

"All right—all right!"

Willie stopped singing and gazed around him like one just awakening from a sound sleep.

"How are you, Will, old boy?" said Pelham, grasping his hand and shaking it vigorously. "What do you think of mesmerism now?"

"Eh?"

"What do you think of mesmerism now?"

"I'm not mesmerized," said Willie.

"Not now; but you have been," returned Pelham. "You've been drinking whisky and singing songs for us."

Willie started as if stung. He was half drunk, and quite conscious of it.

His indignation at having been made to break his pledge at a time when he was powerless to resist got the better of him.

He rushed straight at the professor and dealt him a blow straight from the shoulder that sent him flying across the room, where he fell in a heap in the corner.

CHAPTER III.

THE SCENE IN JOHN WATERMAN'S HOME.

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed Pelham, as he saw the old professor reeling across the room under the blow Willie had dealt him.

Willie started to follow up the blow.

Pelham sprang forward to prevent him.

"And you, too, Henry Pelham!" exclaimed Willie, wheeling on Pelham and giving him a whack. "Make me drunk, will you?"

The barkeeper sprang forward to prevent a fight and caught a blow on the eye that knocked him down.

Willie had developed a wonderful amount of muscle while at work in the machine shop, more than he was aware of himself.

Four of the spectators finally seized him and prevented him from doing any damage. He was unmistakably drunk and in an ugly humor.

"Get out of my way," he said, trying to throw them from him, "or I'll hurt some of you."

"Hold on to him!" cried the landlord. "Don't let him get loose again. Take him out of doors and let him go home."

"Come, Willie," said one of the men, "let's go home. This is no place for you."

"I won't go till I have another drink," said Willie, pulling back like a balky horse.

"Why, you never drink, Willie. You're a temperance man. You've taken the pledge not to drink any liquor."

"Hang the pledge!" said Willie. "What's it good for, anyway? It keeps a man from having any fun, and makes him feel like a fool in the company of others. Give us another drink."

But they would not let him go back into the Village House. He was told to go home and sober up.

As he showed a disposition to go along peaceably, they released him.

He went toward his home, talking to himself on the way.

"Yes, I've broken the pledge," he said; "but it's done now, and I'll have lots of fun with the boys. I work hard for my money, and never have a chance to spend a cent of it. I'm going to have a few dollars to spend every week, even if we don't have much to eat or wear."

On reaching the house Willie hesitated to go up the stairs that led to the two rooms where his parents and sister awaited his return.

He knew they would be astonished at seeing him come in under the influence of drink.

But he was in that desperate frame of mind when one seldom cares for consequences.

Up the stairs he went, stumbling here and there in the dark, and muttering to himself all the way.

When he opened the door he saw his mother and sister sitting by the little table sewing. By the lamp stood a small teacup in which was some fragrant tea, which they were in the habit of drinking before retiring.

On the bed at the opposite side of the room reposed John Waterman, the father.

Nettie and her mother looked up at him as he came in.

His flushed face startled them, and both sprang to their feet.

John Waterman looked up at the flushed face of his only son and burst into tears.

"Why, what ails you all to-night?" Willie asked, in indignant surprise, as he looked around the room.

"Oh, my son! my son!" sobbed his mother.

"Would to God I had died ere it came to this!" sighed his father.

"Oh, don't go to giving us a lecture now," said Willie. "I work hard for my money, and have a right to enjoy it in my own way."

"Brother! brother!" cried Nettie, springing up and clutching him by the arm; "you are cruel—cruel as an Indian to talk that way to our dear father. Look at him. He is as helpless as an infant. The hand of affliction has been laid heavily on him. How good and kind he has been to all of us. How he anticipated our every want and gave us everything we wished for. Oh, can you give him a cross word or—"

"I don't give him any cross words, sis," said Willie, doggedly.

"Oh, but you have broken his heart by what you have done this night. Here, look at this! Here is the pledge with your name signed to it. Read it, Willie Waterman, and blush for very shame."

"Oh, that's all (hic) right. Don't care any (hic) thing about pledge nohow."

"But you have broken our hearts besides," said Nettie, in a husky tone.

Then she broke down completely and, throwing herself into her mother's arms, burst into a passionate fit of weeping, in which her mother joined her.

"Blow me if they ain't (hic) all gone daft," said Willie, standing in the middle of the room and holding on to the back of a chair. "Dunno what's (hic) got into 'em."

"Oh, my son—my son," sobbed his mother. "What have you done? What have you done? You have broken my heart."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Willie, getting angry and dropping into a chair. "You're making a (hic) big fuss about nothing."

"Nothing! Is it nothing to come home in liquor—you—you, who signed yonder pledge never to drink intoxicating liquors of any kind? Oh, my son! my son. May God forgive you!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE TROUBLE THAT FOLLOWED THE BREAKING OF THE PLEDGE.

Language utterly fails to adequately describe the anguish of the parents and sister of Willie Waterman on the night of his return home in an intoxicated condition.

His invalid father prayed that he might die ere another sun rose upon the earth, and his mother wept and moaned only as a loving mother could, whilst Nettie, who had always been so proud of her brother, sobbed herself to sleep in her mother's arms.

Willie slept late, and arose the next morning with an aching head.

Such a headache he never had before in all his life.

"Brother," called Nettie from the other room, "are you up?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Breakfast is ready, then."

Willie came out of his room, and the moment his mother and sister caught sight of his flushed face and swollen eyes they burst into tears.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked, in surprise. "Is father worse?" and he glanced over at the pale face on the bed.

"Oh, my son—my son!" sobbed his mother, "you have broken my heart!"

Willie stood in the center of the room and gazed at his mother, and then at his father and sister.

He was trying to recall the events of the previous evening.

"I didn't mean to do it, mother," he finally said, "and I don't see why you should make such a fuss about a small matter like that."

"Small matter!" gasped his mother. "Call it a 'small matter' for a mother to see her only boy come home drunk! Oh, Willie I would rather see you brought home in your coffin," and she burst into a fresh passionate fit of weeping.

"I didn't do it of my own accord," he said, and then he told them what had occurred at the Village House when the old bummer mesmerist had him under mesmeric influence.

"When I came to," he added, "I knocked the old rascal down, and then they put me out of the house."

"Oh, a fight in the barroom!" moaned Nettie, "and you a member of the Temperance Club! Oh, how can I stand the disgrace?"

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed Willie, impatiently. "You make a great to-do about nothing!"

"Nothing!" exclaimed Nettie. "Brother, do you call breaking a solemn pledge nothing? Oh, you don't know how much you have disgraced yourself! You will be expelled from the society, and—"

"Let 'em expel and be hanged!" angrily returned Willie. "I wish I had never seen the club. I've been tied up hand and foot every day since I joined it. I didn't break the pledge of my own accord—didn't mean to break it—and if they turn me out, why, I don't care—that's all!"

"My son," said his father, on the bed, "don't talk in that spirit. You may not be to blame for drinking last night, but you are responsible for what you do and say this morning. Just say that you won't drink any more, and that you will keep away from the Village House hereafter and shun the company of Pelham and Ben Morgan. That is the only way to make amends for the past. You don't know how this thing has wrung our hearts."

"And that is what stings me, father," said Willie. "Nearly every young man in Redfern who does not belong to the Temperance Club drinks liquor now and then, and they are not disgraced. But the moment I take a drink a great fuss is made, and disgrace falls upon everybody. Pshaw, I am sick of it!" and, without stopping to eat any breakfast, Willie turned on his heel and left the house.

Mother and daughter wept tears of sincere sorrow, and thought he would come in again in a little while.

But he did not return to breakfast, and Nettie hastened to go to the mill ere the bell rang to call the operators to work.

Out on the street Willie saw people looking at him, as if they thought him a curiosity. On his arrival at the shop he found some of the other workmen laughing over a piece of news they had just got hold of.

"Hello, Will!" cried one of them. "You waked up the town last night."

"How waked it?"

"Oh, come off, now! Didn't you get up steam last night and clean out the Village House?"

"Did I?"

"Yes; and the temperance crowd are howling about it. They say they are going to give you the grand bounce at the next meeting."

"Let 'em bounce and be hanged!" he said. "I don't care what they do!"

"That's right; bounce the whole gang yourself," said another. "I used to belong to 'em. They are a set of humbugs. If a man wants a drink and has the money to pay for it, let him have it!"

"Hold on there now," said an old blacksmith at the other side of the shop. "I used to go on that plan and I got down in the gutter. Why not say if a man wants a drink, let him keep his money and drink water. It will do him more good in the end."

"But he won't have any fun," said one of the young men.

"Yes, he will. He'll have money for his old age, and there'll be lots of fun for the old boy then."

"Oh, pshaw! old boys don't have any fun."

"Don't you fool yourself that way, Bill," said the old blacksmith. "I have more fun than anybody in this shop, and more money, too!"

That last remark stopped the laugh that was about to burst forth.

The men knew that he was right on the money part, but they didn't see where his fun came in.

"Oh, we know you've got money, Uncle Jack," said one of the boys; "but where do you have your fun? You must keep that with your money?"

"Well, isn't that a good place to keep it?" he asked, giving the questioner a sly wink. "When money and fun keep to-

gether you can enjoy two things at once. You young uns have a heap to learn yet," and the old man prepared to go to his regular work for the day.

Willie thought seriously of what he heard Uncle Jack say, and had nearly made up his mind that the old man was a good guide after all, when one of the members of the club came by and said:

"So you've broken your pledge?"

Willie's eyes flashed.

"Yes," he said, defiantly, "and I'll break somebody's head if they don't let up on it. I got drunk last night. Turn me out of the club. I don't want to belong to it any longer."

"Oh, we'll do that quick enough," said the temperance brother, turning and walking away.

Ten minutes later another member came by and said:

"They tell me you were roaring drunk last night, Willie?"

"Who told you?" Willie asked.

"Oh, everybody knows it," was the reply of the temperance brother. "Is it true?"

"I guess it must be if everybody knows it," said Willie. "But if everybody would attend to their own business they wouldn't have so much time to attend to mine."

The man went away under the impression that Willie had not quite recovered from the effects of his racket.

In a little while two of the temperance brothers came along for the very purpose of learning the truth for themselves.

"Look here, Willie," said one of them, a deacon in the church as well as a prominent member of the temperance club. "What's this awful story going the rounds about your being drunk and knocking a man down in the Village House barroom last night?"

"Oh, I don't know what you have heard, deacon," replied Willie; "but I was drunk last night and knocked the man down who caused it."

"What a shame! What a disgrace for a young man to act that way!" commented the deacon.

Willie was both mad and out of patience.

"What a lot of old duffers have been around here this morning preaching to me," he said, "as if I had committed some horrible crime. The next man that comes around here talking about my having broken my pledge last night, I'll give him one straight from the shoulder."

The deacon looked at him in astonishment and remarked:

"I guess you haven't got over your drunk yet."

"I am very bad when I am drunk," replied Willie, significantly. "So you had better move on and get out of my way. I feel the tremens coming on now."

"Well, all I have to say is that you are worse than I dreamed you could ever be, Willie Waterman. I am glad we have found you out."

"You canting old hypocrite!" hissed Willie, "if you don't move on, and that very quick, I'll give you a sample of badness that'll make you sick!"

The deacon made a reply that caused Willie to knock him down on the spot. Then he was carried away by his companion and Willie was arrested by the village marshal.

CHAPTER V.

THE SCENE AT THE VILLAGE HOUSE—THE FAITHFUL SISITER.

The news soon spread all over the village that Willie Waterman had knocked Deacon Collins down and was arrested for it.

Henry Pelham heard that Willie was arrested for knocking Deacon Collins down, and went to the justice to give bail for him, if any was needed. The deacon was in a rage and wanted to sue him for assault and battery.

"Oh, you are a nice teacher of charity and good will, ain't you?" he said to the deacon. "You go to his shop and lecture him before all the hands, and he ought to have kicked you into the middle of next week."

Willie was simply fined for disorderly conduct, which took all his week's wages to pay it.

"I've got enough of your temperance people," said Willie, as he was spoken to by the president of the club. "If they had kept away from the shop and let me alone this wouldn't have happened. I am going to drink now whenever I please."

Nearly every drinker in the village wanted Willie to drink with him, and in a little while denunciations of the temperance people were heard on every side.

Henry Pelham met Willie at the bar and treated him to a drink.

"You'll keep away from that cold-water crowd now, eh?" he said.

"Yes. I've got enough of them," replied Willie, as he took another drink.

"I knew you'd get enough of them after a while. You couldn't have any fun in that crowd."

Willie soon began to feel the effects of the liquor he had drank. He became lively and sang songs, and made merry till the old Village House rang with the noise.

It was at this time that the foreman of the shop in which Willie worked sent one of the men after him to come back to his job.

The good-natured crowd caught the man and made him take several drinks, after which they sent him back reeling drunk.

The foreman was mad as a hornet. He sent another man to bring him to the shop.

The crowd served him the same way.

"I'll go after him myself," he said, and he went.

"Waterman!" he called out to Willie, "go to work at once or you'll lose your job!"

The crowd yelled at him.

"Come and have a drink," they called to him.

"I don't drink," he replied. "You bums had better get to work and stop this kind of business."

"Then we'll make you!" they cried, good-naturedly, making a rush for him.

The foreman was a stalwart fellow and very handy with his fists. He knocked four or five of them down, which brought on a free fight.

The end of it was the foreman was carried home on a shutter and Willie was discharged from his shop.

When the mills closed for the day Nettie Waterman tripped along the street toward her humble home. On the way a small boy told her what had happened.

With a heavy heart she ran home to ask her mother if she had seen or heard of Willie since morning.

"No," replied her mother, "he has not been here since he left without his breakfast this morning."

Nettie almost sank through the floor with the heavy weight she felt on her heart.

"I must go and find him, mother," she said, "for I fear that something has happened to him."

Nettie immediately left the house and hastened to the Village House.

She instinctively knew she would find him there.

That was the drinking resort of Redfern.

When she reached the place she saw about a score of men in the barroom, at least half of whom were drunk.

Pushing her way in, she saw Willie standing at the bar with a glass of liquor in his hand.

Without a word Nettie walked up to her brother's side and knocked the glass from his hand.

Willie wheeled fiercely around to see who had struck his glass and found himself face to face with his beautiful sister.

"Nettie!" he gasped.

"Yes, brother," she said; "I have come for you. We are waiting for you at home."

Willie was almost sobered at seeing his sister in such a place. Her pale face and large lustrous eyes seemed to appeal to his manhood as never before.

But he was too much under the influence of drink to be controlled by any one without difficulty.

"Go home, sister," he said. "I'll (hic) come er long soon."

"Come with me now, brother," she said, very calmly. "Father is very ill, and we are all waiting for you."

"Gimme (hic) anuzzer drink," said Willie, turning to the bar.

"No; don't drink any more now, brother," she said. "Come on, now," and she took him by the arm to lead him out.

Willie attempted to pull away from her, when Pelham caught him by the other arm and said:

"Yes, Will; let's go home. Come on now; you've had enough to-night."

Still Willie wanted to stay, but Pelham firmly held on to him and marched him out of the house with Nettie on the other side of him.

"Thank you, sir," said Nettie, in very freezing tones. "I think I can take him home by myself now."

"Indeed you cannot," said Pelham. "He is obstinate and hard to manage. He struck the foreman of the shop to-day because he wanted him to go to work."

"Would he not have gone to work if you had not met him, Mr. Pelham?" she asked.

The question staggered the young mill owner, and he stammered:

"I—I—really—don't know. I didn't keep him from work, I am sure."

"Mr. Pelham, you were the sole cause of all this. You got

him to drink, treated him several times, and now this is the result. May God forgive you, for I don't think I ever can."

"Mr. Pelham," said Nettie, very firmly, "you must not go have treated him in a party of other friends. Every gentleman does that, you know."

"Gentleman! Do you call this the work of a gentleman?"

"Whatcher talkin' (hic) about?" Willie asked. "Gimme er drink."

"Come home now, brother," said Nettie, coaxingly.

"Yes—you must go home, Will," said Pelham. "You can't have any more liquor to-night," and being thus urged and pulled along, Willie no longer resisted. He permitted them to lead him to the door of the old tenement house in two rooms of which the Watermans resided.

There Nettie turned to Pelham and said:

"Again I thank you, sir. But I must beg of you not to again treat him to any kind of drink."

"Yes—gimme er (hic) drink," said Willie, who was in just the condition to feel the want of more stimulants.

"No. You must go to your room, Will," said Pelham. "Come, let's go up, old fellow."

"Mr. Pelham," said Nettie, very firmly, "you must not go up. I can take care of him now."

"Indeed you cannot," he replied. "You will find him unruly."

"Not as much so as you are," she said. "Please leave him with me. I can take him up."

"Anything to oblige you," said Pelham, releasing his hold of Willie's arm. "I'll wait down here to see if you need any assistance."

"I shall never speak to you again, Mr. Pelham, if you come up one flight of stairs even. Go your way and leave me, please."

"I will do so, Miss Nettie," he said; "but you are really unkind to me," and he bowed and went away.

Nettie then turned her attention to Willie, who manifested a disposition to sit down on the stairs and go to sleep. By good management and hard work she succeeded in getting him upstairs into her humble home.

CHAPTER VI.

DOWN THE HILL—WILLIE IS DISCHARGED AND THE FAMILY EVICTED.

The scene that followed her return with Willie was enough to make a stoic weep.

Mrs. Watreman gave a wild, despairing shriek and fell down on the carpetless floor almost lifeless from grief and shame. John Waterman could do nothing but moan and sigh.

As for Nettie, she was past crying now.

She had lost all her girlish ways and thoughts now and all of a sudden she found herself a stern, self-sacrificing woman.

The sooner she got him into his room and in his bed the better it would be for him as well as herself.

She ran him into his room and soon had him in bed.

Then she returned to her mother, whom she found lying on the floor moaning like one from whom all hope had fled.

"Mother! mother!" she said, as she lifted her parent from the floor and assisted her to her bed. "Don't take it so hard. I have much to tell you, but can't do it to-night."

It was long after midnight when Nettie retired.

She was waiting on her father and mother.

The terrible shock they had received had thrown them both into a fever.

When she arose in the morning she found her mother too ill to rise. Her father was worse and demanded a good deal of attention.

"Oh, heavens!" ejaculated Nettie, in dismay. "Mother is ill and I'll have to stay at home to take care of her and father!"

She called Willie to get up and get ready to go to work.

Willie woke up with the worst headache he ever had in his life. His head felt as if it had swelled to double its normal size, and throbbed so violently as to almost make him jump and shriek with each pulsation.

"Oh, my head!" he groaned. "My head! My head!"

"What's the matter, brother?" Nettie asked, looking into the room on hearing him groaning.

"Oh, my head will burst!" he groaned, sitting up in bed and holding his head between his hands.

"Let me make you some strong coffee," she said, "and it will make you feel better. Dress yourself, and I'll have it ready for you by the time you come out. Mother is sick this morning, and I shall have to stay home to nurse her and father. You will have to put in all your time at the shop, for it may be that I can't go back to the mill this week at all."

Willie paid but little attention to what she said, so great was

the pain in his head. He arose, washed his face and bathed his head, groaning the while like one in mortal agony.

By the time he was dressed Nettie had a cup of hot, strong coffee ready for him. He drank it quickly, burning his mouth with the hot fluid.

It gave him some relief, and he prepared to leave the house to go to the shop to resume work.

On the way, however, he met an acquaintance, who called out:

"Hello, Will! How's your head this morning?"

"Bursting!" said he.

"Haven't you heard that the hair of the dog was good for his bite?"

"Yes; but I've got enough of the dog," replied Willie.

"My son," said his friend, looking wisely at him, "never refuse to take medicine when you are ill or in pain. You want a drink of good whisky to clear your head, so you can go right to work. Come and have a drink with me."

Willie hadn't a cent in his pocket. He had spent his last cent in paying his fine the day before and in buying drinks at the Village House.

He accepted the invitation and entered a saloon with his friend.

The drink settled his nerves and quieted his throbbing head, and then he went on his way, feeling much better.

On arriving at the shop the workmen looked at him with interest, coupled with pity, which did not escape him.

He bowed to Uncle Jack and was about to pull off his coat to get ready for work when the bell rang.

"Hold on there!" said the foreman, gruffly. "Put on your coat again. You have been discharged."

"Discharged?" gasped Willie, turning white as a sheet.

"Yes, discharged! This shop does not hold places open for workmen who go on sprees. Another man was put on your bench yesterday."

Willie almost sank through the floor. He realized then for the first time what he had done.

"You don't mean it?" he said, huskily. "I'll never do it again."

"Too late, Will. I sent two men after you yesterday and you and your gang made them drunk. When I went after you to get you to come back to your work you set the gang on me and a free fight followed. You can't get any more work here."

Willie groaned in spite of himself. He knew there was no other place in Redfern where he could get work as a machinist.

"I—I—beg your pardon," he said to the foreman. "I was not conscious of what I was doing."

"That's all right. The boss told me to discharge you. I can't do anything for you."

"Will, my boy," said Uncle Jack, taking his hand and grasping it warmly, "I feel for you all the way down to my toes. I've been right there myself. I lost place after place, and got down into the gutter, keeping a tomato can to drink stale beer from which I got from empty kegs in front of saloons. Rags! Hungry! Dirty! My boy, you'll find out all about it if you don't stop where you are."

"I am going to stop, Uncle Jack, and never touch another drop as long as I live."

"Well, stick to that and you'll come out all right in the end," said the old man.

Willie went away in search of the owner of the shop in which he had been working so long. He found him and begged to be allowed to go to work again.

But the man was obstinate and refused.

"I don't want men in my employ who drink," he said.

"But I won't drink any more," faltered Willie.

"How do I know that? You broke a solemn pledge not to drink. What is your word worth? I've got a man in your place who does not drink. Why should I discharge him?"

Willie was dumbfounded.

He was beginning to realize the situation, and its horrors were creeping upon him very fast.

"My God!" he groaned. "Mother down sick, father needing medicine and food; Nettie staying at home and me discharged. The rent is due and I haven't a dollar in the world, and there isn't but two dollars at home. Oh, God! what a fool I have been!"

Willie was overwhelmed with remorse, but it was the kind that came too late to do any good.

He was sick at heart and growing desperate. Home was the last place he wanted to go to then. He could not bear to look his parents in the face.

Just then he met another friend, who had heard of his discharge.

"Brace up, Will," he said. "You'll get work elsewhere. You

are a good workman. Come and have a drink. It will do you good."

He took a drink because he felt that he needed "bracing up" under the depressing circumstances.

Two or three drinks followed, which braced him up to such an extent that he felt independent, and said he didn't want any work in that shop any more.

When he went home in the evening Nettie saw that he had been drinking again. She did not let her mother see him, but ran him into his room as softly as she could.

Her heart was too full for her to trust her voice.

But in a few minutes she whispered to him:

"Oh, brother, why do you keep drinking? That's what has made poor mother so ill. The doctor says it's worry, and nothing else. Mr. Ross was here to-day and said he can't wait longer than to-morrow for his rent."

"I can't pay it," said Willie, gloomily. "I have been discharged from the shop and haven't a cent left after paying my fine."

Nettie groaned and sank down on a chair almost in a faint.

"Oh, what will become of us?" she moaned.

"God only knows," said Willie, in desperation. "Fate is against me. I have done no worse than others, and yet I am punished as no other has ever been in this town."

Nettie was heart-broken. She did not know which way to turn. She knew that Mr. Ross was a hard man, who exacted the last penny due him and had no charity for the misfortunes of others.

Her grief sobered Willie, and after supper he went out to borrow enough money from his friends to pay his rent.

But they had all heard of his discharge and had no money to lend him. He came home sober, but with an aching heart and throbbing head.

The next morning he was out again early trying to raise a few dollars, but failed. He took two or three drinks with friends and went home to find the landlord's agent evicting the family.

"My God!" he groaned, "this is inhuman! Mr. Sargent, this is cruel!"

"It is business!" replied the agent. "Pay or get out. I am acting under orders."

"Look at my sick father and mother," said Willie, pointing to them as they lay on beds on the sidewalk. "You will kill them! Give me a chance and I'll pay the rent!"

"You should have thought of them when you were spending your money for drink," said the agent. "Out with everything, constable, and give me the keys."

"Spare my poor parents, sir!" cried Nettie, falling on her knees before the hard-hearted agent and clasping her hands above her head. "Spare them for the love of God! Spare them for the love you bear your own parents!"

"I have no right to spare any one," he said. "The property is not mine. I am obeying Mr. Ross' orders. Pay the rent and you can all stay. No rent, no house."

"Nettie," cried Willie, fiercely, "get up! He is a human tiger! We can find shelter somewhere."

"Not until you pay rent for it, I guess," sneered the agent.

Willie rushed up to him and dealt him a blow that sent him reeling across the sidewalk.

"That for your insolence!" he hissed. "Say another word and I'll murder you on the spot."

CHAPTER VII.

THE POOR HAVE FRIENDS AMONG THE POOR—THE WATERMANS' NEW HOME.

The agent was dazed by the blow he had received at the hands of Willie Waterman, and for a moment or two did not know what ailed him.

But when he did recover his wits he exclaimed:

"Constable, arrest the loafer! I'll have the law on him!"

"I am a loafer, am I?" and Willie sprang at him again. "I'll make you take that back or choke the life out of you!"

"Off! Off! Don't touch me! Constable, why don't you arrest him?"

"I have no warrant for his arrest," said the constable. "He served you right, anyhow. I wish he had old Ross here. It's a shame to—"

The agent didn't wait to hear more, but took to his heels and ran down the street to escape the vengeance of the infuriated young machinist.

Everybody on that street hastened to the spot, drawn by the unusual eviction scene—something that had not been seen in Redfern before for years.

They were loud in their denunciations of the man who could be so heartless as to put two old people, one long bed-ridden and the other quite ill, out on the street because one month's arrears was not paid.

Mr. Sargent soon returned, accompanied by the owner.

Mr. Ross was a heartless, haughty sort of man, who believed that his presence would be enough to cower young Waterman.

"What do you mean, you young scamp, by striking Sargent?" he demanded of Willie.

"What do you mean, you old skinflint scoundrel, in calling me a scamp?" demanded Willie, bristling up to him. "Just utter another uncivil word to me and I'll break every bone in your body!"

Ross was dumbfounded.

A poor mechanic talk to him that way! It was outrageous. "Where's the marshal?" he hoarsely demanded, looking around.

"Buckle 'im yourself," said a man in the crowd, which was now fast increasing.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," cried a woman in the crowd, "to put a couple of sick people out of doors that way."

"Yes. Shame! shame!" cried another. "He's the meanest man in Redfern. He ought to be ridden out of town on a rail."

"What's this I hear?" cried old Jack, the blacksmith, pushing his way through the crowd to the side of Ross. "Have you put a sick man out because he owed a month's rent?"

"Yes, I have," retorted Ross. "I can't furnish free quarters to every pauper in Redfern."

"Well, you are the meanest man that ever lived, Mr. Ross. You know who I am well enough—a poor workingman, but before I would do as mean a thing as that I'd lie down and die. The girl works, so does the boy. The parents are sick. You heard the boy was discharged, and was afraid you would not get paid. Bah! you are a contemptible specimen of meanness. Here, girl, take this and get you other quarters. I've been where you are and know how to feel for you," and with that Uncle Jack thrust a twenty-dollar gold piece into Nettie's hand.

"Whoop!" cried one of the workmen who saw the act. "Jack's the man! Down with Skinflint Ross!"

"Yes—down with the old miser!" cried others, and in another minute the crowd was surging threateningly around him.

"It's all right now," said Ross. "They can stay. They have money enough to pay the rent."

"By the powers of goodness!" cried old Jack, "they shall not go back into that place. May those two rooms be forever accursed! May no tenant ever live in them again!"

"Whoop! Hooray!" yelled the crowd, and some one knocked the agent down. Then followed a scene that beggared description.

Seeing his agent knocked down, Ross started to run.

He ran to the railroad and sprang into a car which was just moving out of the depot.

The mob sent a shower of small stones after the train, and then in another minute he was out of their reach.

Then they returned to the place of eviction and threatened to tear down the house.

But a half dozen other poor families living in it saved it from the vengeance of the mob.

Old Jack was the hero of the day. He had come to the relief of the family in the only practical way.

"Uncle Jack," said Willie, grasping the old man's hand and wringing it cordially, "I don't know how to thank you!"

"That's all right, Will, my boy," said old Jack. "Just get another roof over their heads as soon as you can. You don't want 'em lying out here any longer than you can help, you know."

"Will you let me thank you, sir?" said Nettie, coming forward and extending her hand to the old blacksmith. "I don't know your name, and—"

"Jack Murray, miss," said old Jack. "But I don't want any thanks for doing what is right."

"But I do thank you, all the same, Mr. Murray," she said, tears in her eyes.

"Well, call me Uncle Jack, and I'll be paid for all," the old man said.

"Uncle Jack—Uncle Jack," she said, repeating the name twice, "God bless you for this!"

"Amen! and God bless us all," said the old blacksmith, uncovering his head and looking as solemn as one at a funeral.

A man rushed up to Nettie and said:

"Mr. Pelham says you can move into rooms in the house at the corner of Railroad street."

Nettie looked distressed.

"I don't want to go there," she said, turning to her brother. "We can find other rooms, I think."

"Yes," said one standing by, "I know where you can have three rooms which are better than the two you had, and cheaper."

"In the old red house on the water front."

"Oh, yes," said Nettie. "I should like to go there."

"I'll go and see the owner," said old Jack, hastening away.

The old blacksmith had his apron on, and his face and hands were blackened with soot and smoke.

He went to the owner of the old red house and soon arranged about the rent.

Then he sent word for them to move in at once.

So many helping hands were extended that in an hour's time they were comfortably fixed in their new home, more comfortable, if possible, than before the eviction.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD BLACKSMITH AS A REFORMER.

The excitement of the day caused both father and mother to have a bad spell.

A physician was sent for in haste—the old family physician, who had not deserted them in all their trouble.

Both were very ill, and he said it would require faithful nursing as well as nourishing food.

"Do the best you can," said the kind-hearted physician, "and God will take care of you somehow."

Nettie burst into tears.

Every word of kindness now went straight to her heart, for she appreciated them.

Willie was taken by the hand by almost every workingman in Redfern because he had knocked down Sargent, old Ross' agent.

And nearly every one of them asked him to take a drink.

He felt badly under all the circumstances, and wanted a stimulant. But he declined until Ben Morgan came along and persuaded him to have "just one drink."

That one drink led to another, and in a little while he was under the influence of drink up to the fighting notch in the "drunkard's thermometer."

Then he wanted to see old Ross and smash his head.

Pelham came in and shook hands with him.

"Will, old man," he said, "you want to let up on this. It was drink that made all your trouble, you know."

"Oh, I'm all right," said Willie, feeling jolly under the influence of the liquor he had taken.

"Better let up, Will," said Pelham again. "You've had enough."

"Say, when did you join the temperance club?" one of the party asked Pelham.

"I haven't joined at all," he replied. "But when a man has enough I think he ought to stop. Don't you?"

"Yes—when he has enough."

"Well, hasn't he had enough?"

The man looked at Willie and asked:

"How is it, Will, have you had enough?"

"No," was the reply. "Gimme another drink."

Pelham walked away, muttering to himself:

"She will hear that I would not drink with him, and that I gave him good advice."

Willie kept drinking till he was fighting drunk.

When old Jack Murray heard it about the time he was quitting his anvil he went at once to the Village House and took him by the arm.

"Come out of this, Will," he said. "This is no place for a poor man."

"The deuce it isn't!" exclaimed the barkeeper.

"That's what I said, young man," said Jack. "No poor man ought to come here, or to any saloon, and spend his money for drink."

"We don't want any temperance sermons here. Get out with you, now!"

"Yes, when I rescue this poor fool from your clutches," retorted the old man.

That irritated the drink-mixer beyond endurance and he sprang over the bar and gave the old man a kick.

What a mistake he made!

The old man knocked him down and mopped up the floor with him!

The spectators expected to see the barkeeper fire him out with the greatest celerity.

But what a change!

Old Jack, with muscles hardened by long years of toil at the anvil, slung him around, wiped up the floor with him, stood him on his head, and finally left him with his head in a spittoon.

"Kick us again, please!" he said.

The barkeeper pulled himself together and looked around like one in a dream.

"Won't some of you bummers please kick me?" old Jack asked. "I haven't had a scrimmage since I was a bummer twenty years ago. This fellow can't give a mosquito employment two minutes."

The crown stood around in dumbfounded amazement at the terrible energy of the old blacksmith, but not one offered to kick him.

"Come on, Will," said Jack, taking Willie by the arm and leading him out of the place; "this is no place for you," and he led him out of the tavern and walked off down toward the water with him.

"It's a shame that a man of his sense will act this way," commented the old man. "I'm going to sober him up and try to save him if I can. His old mother and father need his help. That brave sister can't carry all the load herself. The boss ought to take him back and give him all the work he can do."

He kept him down on the river bank and made him lie down and go to sleep.

Two hours later one of the boys came down and said:

"Nettie Waterman is up at the tavern looking for him."

"Well, I've got him safe," he replied.

"She's coming down here," said the boy.

Nettie soon came, having been told where she could find him.

Her face was pale and her eyes swollen from weeping.

"Is my brother here?" she asked.

"Yes; I heard he was drinking up at the tavern, and went up there and brought him away. I'll take care of him, and he shall not have another drink."

"Oh, Mr. Murray," she moaned, "is there no way to save my brother?"

"I hope so, miss," he replied. "I'll do what I can. He is a good fellow, but seems to be pretty badly broken up."

"Oh, I could stand it but for my poor father and mother. It is killing them!"

"Yes, yes; I know," and the brave old man hastily brushed a tear from his eye. "But go back home and leave him with me. I won't let him have another drink, nor let him go home till he is as sober as I am."

"Oh, how can I ever forget your kindness?" she said. "Everybody else asks him to drink, and that is the cause of his ruin."

"You see, I have been through the fire myself, miss," he said, "and know just how it is. It was a long time ago, but I have not forgotten it, nor will I ever forget it."

Nettie gave him her hand, saying sadly:

"It is a terrible grief to bear, but I will try to bear it for my parents' sake."

"Be brave and hopeful, and it may come out all right yet," said the old man.

Nettie went away and old Jack gazed after her as long as she was in sight.

"What a jewel she is," he said to himself, "and what a shame for her brother to give her such worry! I feel like trouncing him. Both parents ill and no money in the house!"

By and by Willie woke up from his drunken sleep and glared around him.

The shimmering stars overhead told him that he had been sleeping outdoors somewhere.

The gentle murmuring of the water against the pebbly shore of the Hudson gave him his location.

Old Jack was sitting a little behind him on a stone.

"Lord! how my head hurts!" he groaned.

"It does, eh?" the old man said. "Don't your heart ache any?"

Willie recognized the voice of his old friend.

"Is it you, Jack?"

"Yes, it's me, Will, you young scamp," replied the old man.

Will made no further remark, but waited for the old man to begin.

"I heard you were up at the tavern drunk again," Jack said, after a pause. "I went up there and brought you away to let you get sober before going home. Your sister has been here looking at you lying there like a drunken hog. By the Lord Harry, Will Waterman! I'd like to give you about one hundred lashes with a rawhide on your naked back!"

"I know I deserve them," said Willie.

"Of course you do. You also know the law won't let me give you the thrashing. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Out of work, out of money, both parents down sick, you lie around barrooms drunk instead of trying to get work like an honest man."

"I say, Jack, I'm not as bad as that!"

"Yes, you are, and you know it," replied the old man.

"But I don't mean to be."

"Then you must be an idiot to do things you didn't intend to do."

Willie was hushed up.

He could not discuss the situation from that standpoint.

But his head ached.

It almost jumped from his shoulders in its throbbing.

"Bathe your head good in the water there," said the old man.

"I suppose you want some of the hair of the dog, but you won't get it. I'm going to get you sober once more. Then I'll take you home. If you ever get drunk again I'll see if I can't manage to tie a stone to you and drop you out in the middle of the river."

Willie bathed his face and head in the cooling waters of the Hudson and felt much better.

"Now you want a cup of good coffee and something to eat," said Jack. "Come on and I'll fix you up all right."

He took Jack to his old bachelor quarters and gave him a hot supper, after which he made him go to bed to sleep till morning.

CHAPTER IX.

TURNING THE TABLES.

When Willie Waterman awoke the next morning he didn't have quite such a head on him as on the morning before. But he was dry and thirsty, and it seemed as if water would not quench the fire that raged in his veins.

Old Jack knew just how he felt, for he had been there himself years ago.

"Take a cup of strong coffee," said the old man, "and you'll feel better."

Willie did so, and found the prescription a good one.

"Now, look here, Will," the old man said, "what are you going to do?"

"I am going to try to get work," replied Willie.

"Do you expect to get it by getting drunk every day?"

"I am not going to drink any more."

"That's what you said yesterday."

Will was silent.

"You will keep on till your family go to the poorhouse and yourself roll in the gutter—unless you let up at once. I've been there, Will, and know all about it."

"I shall not drink any more. I did not mean to violate my pledge when I did. It was a mean trick played on me by Henry Pelham and that old mesmerist, Jones—or Professor Johannes,

as he calls himself. He got me under mesmeric influence and made me drink several times of strong whisky."

"Are you telling me the truth, Will Waterman?"

"Yes, the straight truth."

"Well, don't go about that old tavern any more. That's the best way to keep out of the way of temptation."

"I won't go there any more," said Willie.

"Very good. Let's see if you can stick to that. If you keep straight you can get work in the shop again."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, I am."

Willie went home looking all right.

He went up to his father and said:

"Don't be worried, father; I am all right now."

His father looked up at him and asked:

"Have you got work?"

"No, not yet; but Mr. Murray says he thinks I can go back into the shop."

Then he went to his mother, and putting his arms around her neck, kissed her.

She did not smell the fumes of liquor on his breath and her spirits rose accordingly.

Then Nettie came in for an affectionate greeting.

"Have you had breakfast?" Nettie asked.

"Yes—I stayed with Mr. Murray last night. He gave me a good breakfast this morning."

"Did he say anything about seeing me last night?"

"Yes. I know all. It's the last time, sister."

Nettie burst into tears.

"Will you keep away from Henry Pelham?"

"Yes; if I can."

"But you must, brother. That man has made up his mind to ruin you. He caused you to break the pledge."

"Yes; I am satisfied of that now," said Willie.

"The club meets to-night. Can you go with me there and sign the pledge again?"

Willie looked blank for a minute or two and then shook his head.

"No; I couldn't face them," he said.

"I know it would be hard to do, but it might be better if you did it, though."

"No. Deacon Collins would never forgive me. I won't go back."

"Then they will expel you at the meeting to-night," she said.

"I can't help that. If they had let me alone after my fall I would have been all right, but they run me almost crazy with their officious intermeddling."

Nettie had another good cry, for she felt the disgrace keenly of having her brother expelled from the society.

In the meantime Willie left the house again to go in search of work.

He called on Jack Murray at noontime, when the bell rang out the dinner hour.

"Come and see me to-morrow, Will," the blacksmith said, "and I may have some news for you."

Willie went away and tried elsewhere. Failing to find work, he went back home to help Nettie nurse her patients and to keep out of the way of temptation.

That evening old Jack went up to the Village House to see what he could learn of the old mesmerist, Johannes. He was suspicious that the old chap was in some way responsible for Willie Waterman's broken pledge.

Just as he was turning the corner he heard two men talking in the dark. One said:

"Here's the money. I want you to make him drunk as a lord again the first chance you get. But keep quiet about it, though."

"How can I get a chance at him?" the other asked.

"Oh, he is out of a job now and will be walking the streets.

You can meet him and mesmerize him again. Then the rest will be easy enough."

The two men then walked off toward the tavern. As they went past him Jack saw one of the men was Henry Pelham, and that the other was the old mesmerist, Jones.

"Oh, that is your game, is it?" he said to himself. "Well, it is none of my business, but I am going to keep up with it if I can. I don't know why you want to ruin him, Henry Pelham, but I'll try very hard to find out. Old Jack Murray isn't afraid of a dozen of your sort."

He went up to the hotel and took a seat with those on the piazza.

They recollected him as the man who had wiped up the floor with the barkeeper the day before and wondered why he had come there so soon after that lively incident.

"The old man is looking for another scrimmage," whispered one of the party.

"Let's get old Jones to mesmerize him," said one.

"Yes, and get him drunk," suggested another.

Henry Pelham entered into the plan, and in a little while the game began. Several young fellows were soon under the influence of the wizard, and were going through all sorts of absurdities for the amusement of the crowd.

"Try Uncle Jack," said one of the party, and the mesmerist began to try his powers on the blacksmith.

Jack pretended to be mesmerized in a few minutes, when Pelham exclaimed:

"He's got him! Fill him full of whisky. I'll pay for it!"

They moved into the barroom, and the old man went with them.

"Here—drink this!" ordered the mesmerist, in very stern tones, giving him a glass half full of whisky.

Jack took the glass and emptied its contents in the mesmerist's face. Then he followed it up with a blow that laid him out at full length on the floor.

"Look out!" cried the others, in alarm. "He is on the rampage!"

The old mesmerist tried to get up again, and was again knocked down.

Twice more he essayed to rise and each time was laid out.

Suddenly Henry Pelham came within reach of the blacksmith's arm and was instantly downed.

He fell on top of Johannes, the old mesmerist.

"Take him off! Take him off!" roared Jones, thinking the blacksmith had thrown himself on him.

Pelham scrambled to his feet, only to be downed again.

Then the marshal came in to arrest him.

"Keep away—keep away!" called out several. "He's mesmerized."

"Wait till I bring him out of the trance," said Jones, whose eyes were fast closing up.

He lay on his back and yelled at the blacksmith:

"All right! All right! You may go now!"

Jack gave a sudden start and looked around, rubbing his eyes as if just awaking from a sound sleep.

He saw Pelham and Jones scrambling to their feet and heard the crowd laughing.

Then he turned on his heels and walked out of the Village House as if ashamed of the company there.

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD BLACKSMITH PLAYS A GAME.

The scene at the Village House after old Jack Murray left was quite ludicrous.

Pelham and the old mesmerist gazed at each other with an expression on their faces that caused the crowd to roar with merriment.

Their eyes were blackened and blood streamed from their noses.

"See here, you old fraud," said Pelham, "if you can't mesmerize a man better than that you ought to quit."

"He wasn't mesmerized at all," replied the professor.

"The thunder he wasn't!"

"No, he wasn't. When a man is mesmerized he never does anything except what the mesmerist tells him."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Well, why didn't you mesmerize him when you were at it? He might have killed somebody."

"I thought he was mesmerized."

"So did all of us," responded the crowd.

"Yes; he played off on me. Who is he, anyhow?"

"He's old Jack Murray," some one said.

"Well, I want him arrested, for he's beat me almost to a jelly."

"If I thought he wasn't mesmerized," said Pelham, "I'd give him a taste of the law that would make him sick."

"I can swear he wasn't mesmerized," said the professor, "for I know enough about the business to be able to tell when a man is mesmerized."

"Then why in thunder didn't you know it before he broke us up so?" demanded Pelham.

"I didn't know it then; but I know it now."

"Oh, your knowledge comes too late," said Pelham. "My eyes will be in mourning for a week."

"I'm sorry for it," said the professor, "for I am in the same fix."

"Guess you can't mesmerize old Jack," remarked one of the bystanders.

"Lord bless you, no," said another. "Old Jack is one of the toughest customers in this town, and don't you forget it."

"What's his racket, then?" the professor asked. "What did he play on me for?"

"Hanged if I know," said the man, "unless he wanted to mesmerize you."

"That ain't the way to mesmerize anybody," the professor remarked.

"No," said another; "but it is a good way to demoralize a man."

"Well, I'm going to have satisfaction for it," said the professor.

"So am I," added Pelham, "if it costs me all I'm worth. Let's have another drink."

The crowd called for their drinks and Pelham paid for them, after which he went in search of his physician, who prescribed an application of raw oysters to his swollen optics.

In the meantime the old blacksmith wended his way homeward, chuckling inwardly.

"I guess they won't try it on me any more," he said to himself. "And maybe they won't on Will Waterman. I played it on 'em fine. Oh, Lord! how I downed 'em! And the duffers thought all the time they had me mesmerized! Mesmerize me! Ha-ha-ha! Not much! It takes a mighty good-looking woman to do that. It serves 'em right. But I'm blessed if I can understand it. Pelham wants that old professor to make Will Waterman drunk while under mesmeric influence. That's the game, but what's it for? Hanged if it don't jigger me right out."

The old blacksmith reached his home and retired to rest, satisfied with his night's work.

The next morning he was up bright and early and went to the shop to begin his day's labors as usual.

To his surprise he found the whole village laughing over the occurrences at the tavern the night before.

"Hallo, Jack!" cried Ben Morgan the moment he entered the shop.

"Hello, yourself!" he responded.

"You had a high old time last night," said Ben.

"How?" he asked.

"Why, up at the Village House."

"Oh, yes. Well, I went up there last night and got mesmerized."

The workmen roared with laughter.

"Mesmerized?" exclaimed Morgan.

"Yes," returned the old man, quietly—"yes; we had an old fellow up there who can mesmerize anybody."

"Did he mesmerize you?" Ben asked.

"Yes. I didn't believe he could, but he did."

Then the workmen roared again.

"What's the matter with you fellows?" old Jack asked, looking around at them. "What are you laughing at?"

"Oh, Lord!" gasped one of the fellows, holding his sides convulsively. "Take him away! He's too funny altogether!"

Old Jack never smiled, but caught the fellow by the shoulder, wheeled him around and looked him straight in the eyes.

"I'm blessed if you ain't off your nut," he said.

"I say, Jack," called Ben. "What did you do when you were mesmerized?"

"I'm blessed if I know," he replied. "A man don't know anything, they say, when he is under mesmeric influence."

"How did you feel?" Morgan asked.

"Well, I don't know. I felt something like a man feels when he wakes up from a sleep when I came to."

"And don't you recollect anything that happened?" one of the men asked.

"Not a thing," returned the old man, with an honest look in his face.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed Ben, in astonishment.

"What jiggered you?" Jack asked.

"Why, that mesmerizing business."

"Well, I didn't believe in it myself, and so I wanted to try it."

"Well, I should say you did try it," said one of the workmen. "Why, look here, old man, do you know what you did?"

"No. What did I do? Hope I didn't do anything wrong?"

"Why, as soon as you were mesmerized you pitched into the old professor and gave him a blow between the eyes that knocked him into the middle of next week."

"Oh, come off now! What are you giving me?" the old man exclaimed.

"I'm giving it to you straight. When the professor got up, you knocked him into the middle of next month."

"Eh, is that so?"

"Yes; and the next time you knocked him into the middle of next year, and then you let him have a sockdolager that sent him rolling into the next century."

"Good Lord! Did I do that?"

"Of course you did, and that wasn't all, for you pitched in and served Henry Pelham the same way."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" exclaimed old Jack. "Who'd have thought mesmerizing would make you behave that way?" and the old man tied on his leather apron and went about his work.

CHAPTER XI.

WILLIE WATERMAN MEETS THE MESMERIST AGAIN AND FALLS.

A little while after work began in the blacksmith shop Willie Waterman came, according to promise, and asked Jack what the chances were of his getting work.

"Very bad," said the old man; "but you can work with me if you feel strong enough to sling the sledge-hammer."

"Why, of course I am strong enough," said Willie. "I can sling it all day and never feel tired."

"All right, then. Take hold."

Will threw off his coat, put on an apron and went to work.

He had been working about two hours when the foreman came in.

"Who sent you here?" the foreman asked.

"Nobody," was the reply.

"Then get out of here. You are not wanted."

"Not so fast," said old Jack. "He is my assistant, and I pay him out of my own pocket. So it is you that must get out, and not him."

"Oh, that's all right," said the foreman.

"Of course it is," returned Jack, going on with his work.

"You might have known that at first."

About noon a constable came in with a warrant for Jack Murray's arrest.

"What's that for?" Jack asked the constable.

"Why, for cleaning out the Village House last night."

"Why, did I clean it out?"

"From all that I can hear," replied the constable, "I should say you did."

"Well, I'll go along with you," and he threw off his apron, washed his face and hands and accompanied the constable to the magistrate's office.

There he demanded an immediate trial.

Professor Johannes was on hand, with both eyes almost closed and in deep mourning.

Half the men in the village were also present, and, as both sides were ready, the trial proceeded at once.

Henry Pelham had the good sense not to appear, as his punishment had been severe enough, without adding publicity to it.

Old Jack called witness after witness.

Each swore that the professor had mesmerized numbers of them, the old blacksmith included, and that they believed he was under mesmeric influence at the time of the assault.

The professor admitted having tried his mesmeric powers on him, but denied that he had succeeded.

The result of the trial was a decision from the magistrate that, if the plaintiff went about putting people outside of their normal mental condition for the amusement of his friends and profit to himself, he was responsible for their actions, and so the complaint was dismissed, much to the disgust of the professor.

Jack's friends shouted themselves hoarse over his victory, whilst the old blacksmith walked up to the professor, extended his hand and said:

"You got pretty badly broke up, professor; but it serves you right for making a man drink whisky when under your influence."

"But you didn't drink any whisky," angrily replied the professor.

"Well, that wasn't your fault, was it?" and he looked the man straight in the eye.

The professor made no reply, but turned away, more than ever convinced that the old blacksmith had played him a trick.

Jack returned to his shop in the middle of the afternoon and resumed work.

Will Waterman was waiting at the anvil, and they worked together till the bell struck the hour of closing.

A week passed, during which time Henry Pelham kept secluded in his room, nursing his discolored optics.

Will Waterman worked faithfully at the anvil, whilst his mother improved so fast that at the end of three days Nettie was able to leave the house in her charge and resume her work at the mill.

But one evening, as Will was returning home from his work in the blacksmith shop, he met the professor face to face.

"Hallo, Waterman!" the professor greeted, "how are you getting on?"

"Oh, I'm at work again. I'm all right," said Willie.

"Why don't you come up to the tavern and see the boys of an evening?" the professor asked.

"Because it is best for me to keep away," he replied.

"Well, I don't know but what you are right. We would all be better off if we followed that course; but you must come with me. I want you."

The last words were uttered with a force that showed that the speaker was conscious of his power, for he had again mesmerized his victim.

Willie was again in his power, and followed him like a lamb to the slaughter.

They entered a saloon, where, under the direction of the professor, Will drank copiously of strong liquor, and by supper time he was uproariously drunk. Then the professor got away from him and Will reeled over to the Village House, where there were a number of friends always ready to treat him.

Late in the evening, as old Jack was sitting on his doorstep, calmly smoking his pipe, Nettie Waterman came running up to him and asked, excitedly:

"Where is brother? He has not been home to-night."

"Is that so?" the old man asked, very much surprised.

"Yes; and we are very uneasy about him."

"Well, he left the shop all right, and I thought he had gone straight home. I will go and look for him, and I guess you had better run back home and tell your mother that I will take care of him."

"Oh, I am so afraid something has happened! Please let me go with you."

"I guess you'd better run back home," said old Jack, "for it doesn't look right for a good girl going around among the saloons looking for her brother. Just leave it to me."

"Oh, you are so kind to us!" said Nettie, bursting into tears. "I don't know what would have become of us but for you."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Jack. "I always stand by a friend, and I will stand by you and Will to the last!"

"Oh, thank you—thank you!" said Nettie, turning and running homeward.

Jack gazed after her till she disappeared in the gloom of the night.

"The man who wouldn't stand by a girl like that ought to be shot!" muttered old Jack; "and the brother who would bring tears to her eyes ought to be flayed alive."

Jack then started on the rounds in search of Willie Waterman.

He first dropped in at the Village House.

"Hallo, Jack!" cried Ben Morgan, on the piazza of the tavern.

"I say, Ben," the blacksmith asked, "have you seen Willie to-night?"

"Yes; he was here a while ago."

"How was he?"

"Drunk as a biled owl."

"Good Lord! I was afraid of that!" said the man. "Who made him drunk?"

"I don't know, but I guess it was John Barleycorn."

"Of course; but somebody else was at the bottom of it. Have you seen that old bummer mesmerist to-night?"

"No."

"Have you seen Pelham?"

"No."

The blacksmith then went among the other saloons, and at last found Will treating a half a dozen bummers in one of them, and very much under the influence of liquor.

"Why, the boy has got money," said the old man to himself as he saw him paying the money for the drinks, "which is all very strange, for I know he didn't have a cent when he left the shop."

He walked into the saloon and marching up to Will, tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hallo, old man!" cried Will. "Just in time. Have a drink!"

"I say, Will," said the blacksmith, sternly, "is this the way you keep your promise not to drink any more?"

"Oh, let up on that," said Will; "I'm having a good time now. Take a cigar if you won't drink."

"I'll take nothing," said Jack. "I want you to come with me."

"I won't do it," replied Will.

"But you must come, Will."

"But I won't."

"Will, Nettie has been to my house looking for you. You don't want her to come here after you, do you?"

"No; and if she does I will send her about her business," said Will, beginning to get angry. "I am getting tired of this thing. Every time I try to have a little fun the whole town kicks up a big fuss about it."

"That's because we think so much of you. Come on—go home with me."

"I won't do it," and he pulled loose from him and rejoined his boon companions.

The old blacksmith then turned to the saloon-keeper and said:

"He is drunk. If you sell him any more liquor to-night I will have you prosecuted for the violation of the law."

"I think it would pay you better to attend to your own business," said the bartender.

"That's just what I'm doing," he replied.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WRECK OF A SALOON—OLD JACK AND NETTIE MEET PELHAM.

Old Jack Murray was a very determined man, who seldom turned back from anything he set out to do.

On finding that he could not persuade Will to leave the saloon, he resolved to stay near him and forbid liquor being sold to him.

After warning the barkeeper he seated himself at a table as a silent looker-on.

"I say," cried the saloonist, "I want you to get out of here."

"I won't do it," he replied. "This is a public house. Put me out if you dare."

That was something no saloon-keeper in Redfern would dare undertake, for it was well known that no one man could handle him.

"Give me another drink!" cried Will.

The saloon-keeper dared not let him have it while such a witness as the blacksmith was present, so he said to Will:

"I guess you've had enough to-night."

"Why, I haven't had half enough," returned Will.

"Yes, you have. You're drunk now."

"Why, I'm soberer than you are," returned Will. "Give me the bottle. I know when to stop."

The barkeeper refused, and Will grew belligerent.

Taking up a beer glass from the table, he hurled it at the barkeeper's head.

The drink-mixer dodged and the glass dashed through a hundred-and-fifty-dollar mirror back of the bar.

The barkeeper seized a bungstarter and rushed at him.

Will's boon companions joined in with him and a general free fight ensued.

They were five to one, and of course the barkeeper was roughly handled.

They beat him to insensibility and then wrecked the bar.

"Well, well," said the old blacksmith, "this reminds me of old times; but if those young fellows don't lie in jail for this racket it will be because law is played out. I can't do anything with him, and might as well leave him where he is."

The old man left the place, and in a few minutes later the town marshal and several citizens rushed in and arrested the young rowdies.

They were marched off to the lock-up, where they whooped and howled like lunatics until the fumes of the liquor began to make them drowsy.

Long ere Nettie Waterman left her home to go to her work the next morning it was known all over Redfern that Will was in the lock-up, charged with nearly killing Tom Smith, the saloon-keeper.

Nettie never heard of it, however, till she reached the mill where she worked.

Then one of the girls told her what she had heard.

Nettie turned deathly pale and hastened to the blacksmith shop to see Jack Murray.

The blacksmith was at work, but he stopped the moment she appeared.

"Where is brother?" she asked.

"You have heard, have you not?"

"Yes; but is it true?"

"Yes; Will is locked up, and I fear it may go hard with him."

Nettie pressed a hand over her heart and staggered against the blackened wall of the shop for support. Her face was ashen-hued and she was speechless for a minute or two.

"We are ruined!" she gasped.

"Don't say that," he said. "You have more friends than you think."

"But I can't earn money enough to support my father and mother."

"Some way will be provided by which you can," he said.

"Don't worry about that now. How can you break the news to your mother?"

"Oh, I don't know. I fear it will kill her," and she burst into tears.

"My poor girl," said Jack, "if you think it will do any good, I'll go home with you."

"No, it will do no good," she said. "But I would like to see brother before I go back."

"Oh, I guess you can see him. There's no law to prevent that. I will go with you and arrange it," and the old man threw off his leather apron and washed up to go with her to see Willie in the lock-up.

"Don't take it too much to heart," he said, as he wended his way along the street with the weeping girl by his side. "It will come out all right in the end."

She could make no reply.

Her heart was too full to trust to any utterance of her lips.

At the lock-up they were admitted to see the prisoners.

"Oh, brother!" cried Nettie, on seeing him with the others who had been arrested with him. "You would drink, and now you are here! Oh, my poor mother's heart will break when she hears of this."

Willie broke down entirely and wept like a child.

He had been told of what he had done the night before, and knew that it would be a serious matter.

Nettie clung to his neck and wept long and passionately, sobbing the while:

"Oh, my poor mother! my poor father! Oh, what will become of them?"

"Will, my boy, I am sorry for you," said old Jack, grasping his hand. "I did all I could to save you—even giving you work out of my own share in order to keep you out of the way of temptation. But it's no go. I suppose you intend to go through the mill in order to see how it is yourself."

"No, no, no!" said Will. "I did not know anything about it. After I left the shop and started home I met Professor Jones, who stopped me and began talking to me. I don't remember any more till I found myself in this place."

"Good Lord, Will! is that so?" Jack exclaimed.

"Yes, as God is my judge," replied Willie.

"Then you are not to blame. I believe you are innocent, but it will be hard to prove it in court. I had given you up, but I'll stand by you to the last."

Then he turned to Nettie and said tenderly:

"Don't cry any more. I can see a way to pull him through, and I think I can do it. Come on, now, and we'll go back home."

On the way down the street they met Henry Pelham, who bowed to Nettie and, advancing to her side, said:

"I am very sorry to hear of Will's trouble, Miss Nettie, and if I can be of any assistance to you or him in any way, you can command me. I'll send my lawyer to see him."

"I don't think she will need either your or your lawyer's assistance, Henry Pelham," said old Jack.

Pelham flushed red in the face and exclaimed:

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean just what I say," said Jack—"that she does not need your assistance."

"What have you got to say about it, sir?"

"Don't you see the lady is in my charge?"

"Yes. But does that authorize you to reject offers of assistance made to her or her brother?"

"Yes, it does, just now. And look here, Henry Pelham——"

"Mr. Pelham, sir!"

"I know you as Henry Pelham," said the blacksmith, "and I want to tell you, Henry, that all this is going to come home to roost on your head. I have been down at the bottom of your and that old bummer mesmerist's understanding. He was paid to make him drunk, and the man who paid him must also pay the penalty. Do you understand my meaning?"

Henry Pelham turned red and pale by turns, and finally gasped out:

"No; I don't understand your meaning, unless it is that you mean to insult me. I'll hold you responsible for that. A lady's presence protects you now."

"Really, I'm very glad I have the lady with me, then," said the old blacksmith, sarcastically. "Your wrath must be terrible indeed. I shall have to apply to the marshal to protect me."

"I shall not quarrel with you," said Pelham; and then turning to Nettie, said:

"You surely will not refuse my assistance, under the circumstances, Miss Nettie?"

"I shall let Mr. Murray manage my brother's case, sir," said Nettie.

"Certainly—that is right—but my assistance can be commanded at any moment. You are unjustly prejudiced against me, but you must give me a chance to——"

"Come on, Nettie," said Jack, moving on with Nettie clinging to his arm.

Pelham gazed after them in profound silence for a minute or two and then said:

"I see how it is. I must get rid of that impudent old rascal, and then she'll listen to me. What did he mean by what he said? Has old Jones been talking in his cups, I wonder? You can't trust a drinking man out of your sight."

Old Jack accompanied Nettie to the door of her humble home, where he handed her Will's wages for one week, saying:

"I am sure he intended that you should have it. If you need help, let me know, or send for me. I'll take Will's place if you'll let me till he comes out all right again."

Nettie burst into tears and sobbed as if her heart would break. Her mother heard her upstairs and came running down to see what ailed her.

She saw old Jack with her and her heart told her that something had happened to her boy.

"My son! my son!" she gasped, and then sank down in a death-like swoon.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIED OF A BROKEN HEART.

The sudden swooning of Nettie's mother gave the old blacksmith a scare such as he had not experienced in many a year. He thought she was dead at first and looked at Nettie in a bewildered sort of way.

Nettie had seen her mother swoon before, and knew just what to do under the circumstances. She instantly dried her own tears and began ministering to her mother.

"Oh, Mr. Murray," she exclaimed, "won't you please carry mother upstairs for me?"

Jack proceeded to take her up in his arms, fully believing that she was dead.

"Don't take it too hard, Nettie," he said, tenderly. "It must come to all of us, you know."

"Oh, I've seen her faint before," replied Nettie. "A dash of water in the face always brings her to."

Jack drew a long breath of relief and hastened upstairs with his burden as if she were nothing more than an infant.

Nettie tripped up the stairs behind him, and at the top of the stairs pushed ahead and opened the door of their rooms for him.

He entered with Mrs. Waterman in his arms and deposited her on the bed which Nettie indicated.

Mr. Waterman was lying on his side with his face toward the door when they entered.

"What's the matter?" he asked of Nettie. "Tell me quick, child!"

"Mother has fainted, father," she replied. "Keep quiet and don't say anything," and she hastened to dash some cold water in her mother's face the moment Jack laid her on the bed.

Jack turned and looked at him.

It was the first time he had seen him since he had taken to his bed. The recognition was mutual.

Jack stepped across the room and took the sick man's hand in his.

"How do you feel to-day, Mr. Waterman?" he asked.

"Weary. I want to die, Jack," replied the sick man.

"You should not feel that way, Mr. Waterman," said Jack.

"Jack, tell me what has happened. My wife never faints at a trifle."

"I really don't know why she fainted, unless it is on seeing Nettie come home at this time of day."

"Why did she come home?"

Jack looked him full in the face and said:

"You must ask her about that," he said, "for she knows more about it than I do."

"Nettie, come here," called her father to her.

Nettie came to his bedside.

"Has Willie been drinking again?" he asked.

"Yes, father."

"Where is he now?"

"In the village, father."

"Where in the village?"

She glanced at Jack and said:

"Tell him all," and then, kissing her father tenderly, tripped back into the other room to attend to her mother.

Jack turned to the sick man and said:

"Will got into a row last night in one of the saloons and the whole party were locked up by the constable."

John Waterman gave a groan and closed his eyes.

Old Jack did not want to look upon his distress, and so arose, and going to Nettie, asked:

"Is there anything I can do for you? I will take Will's place till he comes home again."

Nettie looked up with tears and said:

"I don't know of anything you could do now. Please do what you can for my poor brother."

"Of course I will. Will has the stuff of a good man in him, and I would like to save him if I can."

"Yes. I am sure he did not mean to do wrong."

He then shook hands with her and left the rooms.

"The poor girl has her hands full," he muttered, as he walked back to his shop; "and if her mother should be sick again it would go hard with her indeed. Will ought to be flayed alive for such conduct."

About half an hour after Jack left the Watermans' rooms Nettie went to her father's bedside to speak to him; but he seemed to be sleeping so sweetly that she would not wake him.

"Dear, dear old father," she murmured, "how I wish I could bear all you suffer. How gladly I would take your place."

She went back to her mother's side and remained there another half-hour, at the end of which she again noticed her father.

"Father," she called softly, "let me make you some tea."

She touched his hand with hers.

The cold, clammy feeling caused her to start.

She quickly laid her hand on his face.

The next moment she gave a wild scream that startled every one in the building.

John Waterman was dead!

The scream recalled Mrs. Waterman to herself.

She sprang up from the bed and rushed to the bedside of her husband.

Nettie was on the floor in a dead faint.

Another shriek rang out that startled the other occupants of the house and then all was still.

The other tenants rushed in to see what caused the shrieks, and then it was known that John Waterman was dead at last.

But the mother and daughter were both lying on the floor in a dead faint.

The good neighbors at once went to work to restore them to consciousness, and in a little while succeeded in doing so.

But it went hard with both of them.

Nettie dearly loved her father, and his sudden death nearly killed her.

She wept as if her heart would break, and nothing that could be said to her gave her any comfort.

"My poor father—my poor father!" she cried continuously, wringing her hands and moaning as if in great mental anguish.

During the day one of the tenants in the house carried the news to old Jack Murray at his shop.

"What!" the blacksmith gasped, in astonishment. "Why, I saw and talked with him this morning."

"Well, he is dead now," said his informant, "and the mother and daughter are in the deepest distress."

"Yes, of course they are. I'll go back with you and see what can be done for them. What a pity it is that Will should be locked up."

"Yes; it will go hard with him when he hears of it. The fact is, I believe his conduct is what killed his father."

Jack made no comment, but went to the house and saw Nettie.

She was bravely trying to bear up under the blow, and his presence seemed to give her strength to do so.

"It's hard, Nettie," he said to her, as she laid her hand in his, "but you must have been expecting it all along for some time."

"Yes," she sobbed, bowing her head, whilst tears came afresh.

"Well, be brave and bear up for your mother's sake. I will look after the funeral for you."

Nettie sank down into a chair and made a desperate effort to control herself.

Jack ordered the coffin and paid for it out of his own pocket, after which he went to the lock-up and saw Willie.

"Willie," he said, "have you heard the news?"

"Yes," replied Willie; "I heard it an hour ago."

Jack looked at him and wondered if he had any heart.

"Jack," said Willie, "I have tried to, but cannot shed a tear. I have a terrible pain tugging at my heart, caused by the suspicion that the news of my arrest and detention here caused his death. If I were sure of that I would kill myself before they buried him."

"My dear boy, I have no doubt but that your conduct hastened his death. It would be natural under the circumstances. If it were not for your mother and sister I would be in favor of lynching you. You ought to be swung up and left for the crows to feed on. But that would kill your mother. Now what do you intend to do—kill her also?"

Willie was dumbfounded at the words of the old blacksmith, and for several minutes did not make any reply.

"What say you?" Jack asked.

"Jack, I am going to do what's right if I can get out of this scrape," replied Willie, almost choking with emotion.

"What do you think is right?" the blacksmith asked. "To kill yourself would be right if you had no mother to survive you, for I don't think such a man as you ought to live. But your mother's life is wrapt up in yours. How are you going to treat it? That's the question."

"I am going to work and never touch another drop of drink," he replied.

"Ah, Will!"

"I mean it, Jack."

"I suppose you meant it before, but here you are, all the same."

"Yes; but I did not know anything about it. Old Jones mesmer—"

"Yes—yes; I know. Old Jones will meet you at every corner as you go along through life."

Jack soon left him and went back to the widow and her weeping daughter. He talked encouragingly to them and assisted the kind neighbors in arranging for the funeral.

Two days later John Waterman was laid away to rest, and the great, busy world rolled on just the same as if he had never lived.

CHAPTER XIV.

NETTIE MEETS PELHAM AGAIN—THE BOGUS JUDGE.

The death and burial of John Waterman caused no little talk in the village of Redfern.

Every one understood that his death was hastened by the conduct of his son Willie.

They knew that he was the immediate cause of his father's death, and for that reason a strong prejudice arose against him.

"He broke his father's heart and hastened his death," said old Deacon Collins, "and ought to be sent to prison for life."

"But that would kill his mother," said another.

"Yes," said Jack Murray; "we want to deal with him gently for her sake."

"Gentleness would be thrown away on him," said the deacon. "But not on her," replied the old blacksmith.

So the gossip ran for a week or so after the funeral of John Waterman; but old Jack never faltered in his devotion to the mother and daughter. He did all he could for their comfort, and employed counsel to defend Willie from the consequences of his misconduct.

He endeavored to persuade the saloon-keeper not to prosecute, even agreeing that Willie should leave Redfern forever. But the man was obdurate, and threatened to give all five the full penalty of the law.

"He is young yet," said the old blacksmith. "You sold him the liquor that made him drunk, and ought, therefore, to be lenient with the boys."

But it was no use talking with him. He was vindictive,

and one could not well blame him when it was remembered how badly he had fared at the hands of the young men.

The time for the trial came on apace and everybody in Redfern believed it would go hard with the young men in the lock-up.

Suddenly the town was startled with the news of the death of the saloon-keeper.

He had committed suicide in the rear room of his saloon by blowing out his brains with a revolver.

It was the first suicide ever known in the village, and the people were therefore very much excited.

It was very difficult to ascertain the motive of the suicide.

Some were inclined to believe that the beating he had received at the hands of Willie Waterman and his companions had produced insanity.

But in his death was lost the testimony that would have sent Willie Waterman to prison for a term of years, and none knew that fact better than Jack Murray himself.

He soon gladdened the hearts of the mother and sister by explaining to them the situation.

"I think the lesson will do him good," he said, "and hard work will keep him out of temptation."

Nettie went that day to see her brother in the lock-up. It was late in the afternoon, and when she came away the village street lamps were being lighted.

On the way back home she met Henry Pelham face to face.

"Why, Miss Nettie!" he exclaimed, extending his hand. "I am glad to see you. How is Will? I am on my way to see him now."

"Oh, Mr. Pelham!" she cried, "please don't go near him!"

"Why not? Will and I have always been good friends."

"No—no—you have been his worst enemy!" she replied. "You have invited him to drink many a time, and drink is what ruined him. Please don't add to our misery by ever speaking to him again."

"Why, what a strange request that is! I have discouraged him from drinking as much as I could. I want to see him make a man of himself, and will give him work in the mills to—"

"He will work with Mr. Murray when he gets out," said Nettie, "to pay the debt we owe him."

"Oh, don't let that trouble you; I can pay the blacksmith back and relieve you from that obligation. He is not the sort of man you should be under obligation to, anyway."

"Mr. Murray is a gentleman in every sense of the term, Mr. Pelham," said Nettie. "He assisted us when we needed a friend, and we can never forget his kindness."

Just then a man whom Nettie did not know came up and Pelham tipped his hat to him in a respectful way.

"Ah! How do you do, Mr. Pelham?" said the man, grasping his hand and shaking it warmly.

"Glad to see you, judge," said Pelham, shaking hands very cordially with the newcomer.

Then, turning to Nettie, he said:

"Permit me to introduce my friend, Judge Campbell, of the Supreme Court, Miss Waterman."

Nettie was surprised at the sudden introduction, but bowed to the man she heard addressed as "Judge."

"Miss Waterman is a sister of the young man to be tried before you next week, judge," said Pelham, "and I am glad she has met you before the court meets, as you can see for yourself that she and her family are worthy people."

"Of course—of course," said the judge, bowing profoundly and extending his hand toward her. "I have heard as much before. You have nothing to fear, young lady, when your brother's case comes before me."

Nettie was overjoyed at meeting the judge and having such an assurance from his lips.

"Oh, thank you, judge!" she said, placing her hand in his. "You have taken a heavy load off my heart."

"Then I shall sleep better to-night," he replied, "as I am sure you will. It does my heart good to know that I have made another heart happy."

"You have made three happy, indeed!" she exclaimed. "I am sure my brother will be another man altogether when he comes out."

"The lesson ought to do him good. I've seen many a young man turn over a new leaf under similar circumstances."

"Miss Waterman was on her way home when I met her, judge," said Pelham, "and as you were walking that way also we may as well go, so as not to detain her."

"Yes—yes, of course," said the judge. "The ladies are the first consideration always. Take my arm, Miss Waterman," and he gallantly tendered his arm to Nettie.

She accepted it of course. He was a judge. She was but a poor mill girl and could not refuse the honor shown her.

On the way down the street the judge talked to her in such a gallant, yet respectful way that she was charmed into thinking him one of the most agreeable men she ever met.

People passed them and wondered who the stranger was. Nettie was conversing with so familiarly without a thought of her surroundings.

Suddenly the judge turned to Pelham and said:

"She is mesmerized hard and fast."

"Ah! At last! Lead her to the carriage round at Factory lane. I'll meet you there," and with that he hastened away very hurriedly.

Professor Jones—for he it was who personated the judge—walked his mesmeric victim to the next street and turned the corner, going in the direction of Factory lane.

Nettie walked along like one in a dream, speaking only when spoken to, apparently as happy as an infant.

CHAPTER XV.

OLD JACK TAKES THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS.

Old Jack Murray was sitting on the doorstep of his humble home at ten o'clock at night smoking his pipe when a boy about fourteen years old came up and said:

"Uncle Jack, Mrs. Waterman sent me after you. She wants to see you."

"Eh? What's the matter, Tommy?" the blacksmith asked.

"Oh, she's going on awful about Nettie, who went to see Will and ain't come home yet."

"The thunder you say!" ejaculated Jack, springing to his feet and hurrying away in hot haste.

He ran almost all the way to the red house where the Widow Waterman lived.

Dashing up the stairs like a boy, he knocked at the door.

Mrs. Waterman opened it.

"Oh, Mr. Murray!" she cried, wringing her hands, "where is my Nettie? What has become of her?"

"I have not seen her since morning," he said. "When did she leave the house?"

"At six o'clock. She said she would run over and see Willie and tell him what you had said. She has not come back, and I am sure she has not been there all this time."

"Keep quiet, ma'am," said he, "and I'll hunt her up. She may have stopped with some kind friends and will be along soon. I'll bring her back as soon as I find her," and with that he hastened away to make inquiries of the man in charge of the lock-up.

"She left her brother just as the street lamps were being lighted," said the man. "Isn't she at home with her mother?"

"No—she has not been seen by her mother since six o'clock."

"That's strange," said the man. "I can't imagine what has happened to her."

Jack lost no time in making inquiries, and soon learned that she had been seen talking with Henry Pelham on River street; another said he met her walking down the street with a stranger, and that Pelham was with them.

"Ah!" and a dark, ominous scowl spread over the old blacksmith's face, "I may have that man's blood on my hands yet."

He went straight to the Village House, where Pelham was in the habit of going of evenings.

It was now almost midnight and but few men were about the barroom of the house.

"Have you seen Henry Pelham this evening?" he asked of the proprietor.

"No," was the gruff reply.

The landlord was embittered against him for the way he had wiped up the floor with his barkeeper a little while before.

"Have you seen the professor?"

"I don't keep a bureau of information," replied the landlord.

"Perhaps you don't," snapped old Jack, "but you've got the information I want, and if you don't hand it out I'll put you in a bureau where the worms'll make banquets on you."

"I have not seen either of them to-night," was the prompt answer of the landlord, who did not care to encounter the irate son of Vulcan.

"Well, why didn't you say so before?" replied Jack.

The landlord made no reply, and Jack went away puzzled beyond measure at the mystery of Nettie's absence.

"They're at the bottom of it," he muttered to himself, "and if a hair of her head is harmed I'll break every bone in their bodies."

He went back to the widowed mother and told her that he had been unable to find her, but that he believed that she would return all right in the morning.

He left her more dead than alive and went out on the deserted streets of the village. There was no sleep for him that night, and he did not even seek any.

He walked the streets, thinking, thinking, thinking, and vowing vengeance on the wretches who were thus heaping new troubles on the head of the devoted widow.

Daylight came and old Jack returned to his quarters and prepared a breakfast for himself.

Then he went around to see Mrs. Waterman. To her he was as frank as it was his nature to be. Said he:

"She is not in Redfern, ma'am; but I'll find her."

Mrs. Waterman became hysterical and the old blacksmith took leave at once.

Leaving word at the shop that he would not work any that day, he went in search of Henry Pelham.

He found him in his office.

"Mr. Pelham," he said, "I have come for Nettie Waterman. Where is she?"

"What do you mean, sir?" Pelham demanded. "I know nothing of the girl's whereabouts."

"You know very well what I mean, Henry Pelham," returned the blacksmith. "I know your game. She has not been seen since dark last evening, when you and your dirty tool were seen with her on River street. I have come for her, and you shall not live to see her again if she is not surrendered at once."

Pelham turned ashen-hued and gazed at him as if trying to fathom the old man's thoughts.

"Your own life depends on it," said Jack.

"How so?"

"I'll kill you if you don't give her back to her mother!" he replied. "Do you understand that?"

"Yes. I—I—don't know anything about her."

"That won't do. I know you better than that."

There were two clerks in the office.

One of them tried to slip out by a side door.

"Stop!" hissed the blacksmith, drawing a revolver. "If you make another move I'll riddle your carcass with bullets!"

"D—d—don't shoot!" stammered the clerk.

"Stand still, then," said Jack.

Then, turning to Pelham, he added:

"It's no use, Pelham. If you don't give her up I'll kill you as you stand there! I know you have her, or caused her to be carried off. So you are a dead man if you don't give her up!"

Pelham was at his mercy, but saw no mercy in the cold gray eyes that gazed him in the face.

"Shall I count three and blow your brains out?" Jack asked, after a pause of some minutes.

"I'll send her home to-day," he gasped.

"No; you'll go with me and give her into my hands," said Jack, with emphatic sternness.

"But I can't do that."

"Then you are a dead man in three minutes," was the reply.

"I won't stand any nonsense."

"I don't know where she is till I see Jones."

"Well, come along, and we will go and see Jones. I'll go with you, and on the first attempt at treachery I'll blow you into kingdom come."

Henry Pelham put on his hat and left the office with the old blacksmith, who put his revolver in his pocket when they reached the street.

"We must take the train," said Pelham.

"Very well—which way?"

"Down the river."

"Then we'll wait two hours. Get in the corner of the depot and wait. Come on."

They went over to the depot and waited for the train.

In the meantime the two clerks who were left in the office ran out the moment old Jack and his man were out of sight and raised the greatest excitement ever seen in Redfern by telling the people what had just happened.

A crowd was quickly raised to rescue Pelham from the mad blacksmith.

They rushed to the depot.

Jack saw them coming.

"If you try to get away you are as good as dead, Henry Pelham," he said. "Don't forget that."

Pelham said nothing.

"Halt!" cried the blacksmith, aiming his revolver at the foremost man of the crowd. "Come another step nearer and you are a dead man!"

The crowd recoiled.

They knew old Jack was a bad man to tackle.

But they crowded around the door of the depot and glared at the strange situation.

The news spread all over the village like wildfire, and people came running from every direction. The factories and workshops were emptied and the hands crowded around to the number of several hundreds.

When the crowd became so large Jack saw that a rush was about to be made on him.

"See here, boys!" he cried to them. "Nettie Waterman disappeared from home last night and can't be found. I suspected that Pelham had carried her off, or else had it done. She hates him, for I heard her tell him so myself. I faced him about it to-day and made him own up. He is going to take me to her now or I shall put a bullet through his head. If he is innocent, all right. If you rush on me I'll kill some of you and let him have the last bullet."

Just then the whistle of the down train was heard and Jack called out:

"Clear the way there! Stand off till we get on the train. Back—back—out of the way! Come on, Pelham! A trick will settle you! Jump on board as soon as the train stops—now!"

CHAPTER XVI.

VILLAINOUS WORK—OLD JACK MAKES AN ARREST WITH HIS SIX-SHOOTER.

Let us now return to Henry Pelham and the unprincipled old mesmerist, known as Professor Johannes.

When Pelham saw beautiful Nettie Waterman going to the lock-up alone to see her brother he very rightly surmised that she would also come away unattended.

He hastened to find the professor and told him what he had seen.

"I'll meet her as she comes back," he said, "and talk to her till you come up disguised. I'll introduce you as Judge Campbell, who is to try her brother. You can say enough to win her good graces, and thus get a chance to mesmerize her. The moment she is under mesmeric influence you must let me know, and then take her to a carriage around on Factory lane, where I will meet you."

The villainous mesmerist readily promised to do as he was told. How well he did so the reader already knows.

He led the poor girl round to the carriage, where Pelham met him and the three entered the vehicle together and were driven rapidly away.

The carriage took the river road, and was soon beyond the limits of the village of Redfern.

"We have worked the game well, professor," remarked Pelham, as the carriage bowled along the road.

"So we have," replied the villain, "but I guess you'll have some trouble about it in the village."

"How so?"

"I saw several persons who passed us turn an look back at us. They may say that she was last seen with you and a stranger."

"Bah! What if they do? Who is going to bother themselves about what becomes of a poor factory girl?"

"She has no relatives who can give you any trouble?"

"No. Her brother is in jail, and her mother will soon be an object of charity. She will not make much of a fuss about it, I guess."

During all the conversation Nettie sat like one in a dream, and did not utter a word except when spoken to by the mesmerist, who had complete control over her will power.

"How long can you keep her under mesmeric influence, professor?" Pelham asked.

"As long as I please," was the reply, "and while near enough to speak to her. Of course in my absence it would gradually wear off."

"Well, I want her kept under the influence as long as possible, for I shall go back to Redfern before morning, for my absence at the same time as hers would soon make out a case against me."

The carriage drove about ten miles down the river to a large stone house, which was richly furnished throughout, but unoccupied except by two servants.

The house stood on the banks of the river and belonged to the Pelham estate.

The parents of Henry Pelham were in Europe, which accounts for the house being almost tenantless at the time of which we write.

The old woman in charge of the house met them at the door and seemed very much surprised.

"Becky," said Henry to the old servant, "this is Judge Campbell, and this young lady is his niece. Give them all the attention they need. They will stop here a few days."

Becky could not say anything of course, being only a servant, and the party were shown into the parlor.

"I must go back to Redfern to-night, Judge," said Henry, loud enough for Becky to hear, "and will run down again some time to-morrow."

Then he took leave of them and the next moment was gone.

Becky took charge of Nettie and put her in the room she was to occupy.

Judge Campbell was shown upstairs to another.

On the way back to Redfern Pelham bribed his driver to silence about the occurrences of the evening, and went to bed a little before daylight, congratulating himself that at last he had the young beauty in his power.

On his way down to his office after a late breakfast he heard that Nettie Waterman was missing and could not be found anywhere in the village.

"Maybe she has run away with somebody," he said.

"They say that you were seen talking with her last evening," said Ben Morgan.

"Yes; I spoke a few words with her," he replied, "and I afterward saw her with another man."

"Yes; they say she was seen talking with a stranger," put in another who was standing by.

"Oh, I guess she left a note for her mother somewhere about the house," remarked Pelham, "telling her about the elopement."

"The old lady is all broke up," said another.

"So is old Jack Murray," put in Ben Morgan.

"Why, what's he got to do with the girl?" Pelham asked.

"I guess he's dead gone on her," replied Ben. "At least that's what I suspect, anyway."

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed another, "Jack is old enough to be her father!"

"So he is, and fool enough to pay their house rent and the funeral expenses out of his own pocket."

"Did he do that," Pelham asked.

"Of course he did, and everybody in the village knows it, too."

"Well, I didn't know it," said Pelham.

"Then you don't keep posted, that's all," said the other, walking away.

Pelham went to his office and sat down to think of what he had done.

He was afraid of Jack Murray, for he had felt the blacksmith's hard fist once and did not care to encounter it again.

To make his nerves more steady he took a loaded revolver from one of his table drawers and placed it in his pocket.

How old Jack came in and marched him out to the railroad station the reader already knows. Pelham was afraid to make an attempt to draw his weapon, for fear the blacksmith would get the drop on him.

When the crowd rushed to the station Pelham hoped they would rescue him, and thus give him a chance to get the clutches of the law on Murray.

But everybody in Redfern knew that old Jack would shoot if provoked to do so, and no one cared to provoke him.

As the train rushed into the station Jack hurried him forward, saying:

"Lively now, and none of your tricks. Make a break and you'll catch a bullet!"

Pelham was as white as a ghost and cast despairing glances at the crowd.

"All aboard!" cried the conductor.

"On board with you—quick!" hissed Jack, and Pelham obeyed.

He dared not do otherwise, and in another minute he was seated by Jack's side in the car.

About a dozen citizens of Redfern got on board at the same time, determined to see how the thing would end.

Among those who went on the same train was one of the clerks in Pelham's office.

Jack saw him in the next car, and knew from the excited crowd around him that he was telling them a cock-and-bull story about the affair.

Pretty soon the conductor came through the car taking up tickets.

"I have no tickets," said Jack, "but plenty of money to pay with."

"How far are you going?" the conductor asked.

Jack looked at Pelham.

"How far is it?" he asked.

"To the city," Pelham replied.

"Very well. Take two fares out of that," said Jack, taking a bill out of his vest pocket and handing it to the conductor.

"I can pay my own fare," said Pelham.

"I am paying it to-day," replied Jack. "You can settle with me some other time."

"I can settle right now," and Pelham thrust his hand in his pocket as if to draw his purse.

"Stop!" hissed Jack. "Draw your hand out slowly, with the hand open, or you are a dead man!"

The conductor saw and heard all that passed between them.

"Is that man your prisoner?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Jack.

The conductor passed on, and the crowd in the next car pushed into the car where Jack and his man were seated.

Jack saw the clerk among them and beckoned to him.

The clerk came forward.

"See here," said the blacksmith. "If you attempt any games on me I'll make worms' meat of you and your boss. Try it on if you dare."

The clerk made no reply, but went back into the other car to ponder on what he should do.

He had already telegraphed to the city for a dozen men to arrest the blacksmith on the arrival of the train.

In a half hour more the train entered the Grand Central Depot and a half dozen detectives boarded it.

CHAPTER XVII.

OLD JACK HAS THE TABLES TURNED ON HIM.

The moment the old blacksmith saw the detectives enter the car and approach him he knew that resistance would prove useless.

They were too many for him.

"Here, we want you!" said the foremost detective, laying a hand on his shoulder.

"What for?" he asked.

"Yes, take him!" cried Pelham, springing to his feet. "He is a lunatic, and is armed. Look out for him!"

"We've got him, sir," said the detective. "Don't worry."

"I understand the game," said Jack, very coolly. "But I presume you want to do what is right?"

"Of course we do," replied the detective.

"Very well. Take this man along with me to the station. He has abducted a young girl, and this morning I told him I would kill him if he didn't give her up. He said she was down here, and so I made him get on a train and come down here after her. This is the trick he played me. My name is Jack Murray, of Redfern. His is Henry Pelham, of the same town. Take us before any judge and let him look into the matter and telegraph to Redfern for particulars."

"Don't you see he is a lunatic?" said Pelham, slipping a roll of money into his hand. "Lock him up before he shoots somebody."

"Yes, of course. Come on, sir!" and the detectives pulled him out of the car in a very rough manner.

"That's all right, but bring him along, too," said Jack. "I am making no resistance."

"Shut up and come along," said the detective.

"Will you bring him along, too?"

"No. Come along."

"Then I'll see that he comes," and ere the detective could

divine his intentions old Jack sprang forward and caught Pelham by the collar.

"Now lead the way to the station and I'll follow you."

"Let go that man, sir!" hissed the detective.

"Oh, no. Take me to the station. I make no resistance."

"Let go that man, or I'll club the head off of you."

"If you strike me I'll break you all up, young man," said old Jack. "Just take me to the station house, that's all you have to do."

The detective struck at him, but the blacksmith parried the blow and knocked him senseless at his feet. Then he turned to the other detectives and said:

"Take us to the station. We are ready to go."

The detectives drew their weapons and ordered him to release Pelham.

Just then two policemen ran up, and one of them asked:

"What's the trouble here?"

"Why, that man's a lunatic," said Pelham, pushing forward and pointing toward Jack. "He drew a revolver on me on the train and held me in mortal terror till the detectives took him in charge when the train arrived."

"Come on to the station, then," said the policeman, "and you must make the charge against him."

"Oh, I don't want to appear against him," said Pelham.

"Of course you don't," said Jack, in sarcastic tones.

"But you must come," said the policeman, taking him by the collar.

"That's all I want," said Jack.

"I'll make a charge against you for knocking me down," said the detective whom Jack had knocked out in one round.

"And I'll make one against you for striking me," returned Jack, "after I had repeatedly told you that I would go along with you without making any resistance."

They were thus marched to the station house, followed by a throng of several hundred people who had gathered about them.

At the station house Pelham tried hard to avoid making any charge against Jack. But the captain made him do so, and Jack was held for trial the next day.

"Now, look here," said Jack to one of the detectives, "I want to see you on business."

The detective stepped aside with him, and in a few minutes he was in possession of all the facts in the case.

"I have plenty of money," he said, in low tones. "Here's \$100 to start on and pay you for expenses. I want you to start at once on Pelham's trail and find that girl. I'll be out of this to-morrow, and will join you if you leave a note for me at headquarters."

The astonished detective took the money and promised to do the square thing by him.

Then old Jack sent for a certain lawyer in the city, after which he was locked up in a cell.

The lawyer soon came to the station and had an interview with Jack.

He was a man of great influence in the court circles of the city and had attended to some very important legal business for Jack some years before.

"I'll arrange matters all right for you, Murray," he said, "and it may be that you can stop with me to-night instead of remaining here."

"Oh, this will not hurt me any," said Jack. "I can stand it till to-morrow morning."

The lawyer went away and returned an hour later with an order from the judge to allow the prisoner, Jack Murray, to go on his own recognizance till ten o'clock the next day.

The captain was astonished when he received the order; but he opened the door and let Jack out, for all that.

He accompanied his counsel to his home, where he was treated like a nabob.

But after supper he went to detective headquarters to inquire about the man he had employed as a detective to trail Pelham.

"Breck is a poor detective," said the man in charge. "You should not have given the case to him."

"Why not?"

"He hasn't had experience enough."

"Well, maybe he will try to learn something of the business," said Jack, as he turned away.

At the door he met the man he had knocked down at the depot.

"Why, how did you get out?" the man demanded.

"Walked out," he replied.

"I arrest you as an escaped prisoner," said the man.

"I protest," said Jack. "I am out on an order from the judge."

"I don't believe it. Come on, I arrest you!"

He carried Jack to the station and there learned of his mistake.

The detective looked blank.

"I guess I've got a case against you for false arrest," said Jack, smiling, "and I'll set my lawyer after you."

The detective made all sorts of apologies, but Jack wouldn't have them.

"Had you arrested that man Pelham this morning," he said, "I would have had some feeling for you. As it is, I have none, and am going to make you know how it is yourself."

In court the next day Jack's lawyer dwelt eloquently on the fact that his accuser had not put in an appearance and the judge discharged him on the ground that nothing was urged against him.

He wanted to tell the judge the story of Nettie Waterman's abduction, but, as it was out of his jurisdiction, the court would not listen to him.

"Well, I am loose again," said Jack, "and can go on the trail myself. If I get a chance at Henry Pelham again I'll make him rue the day he was born. It was a nice trick that clerk paid me; but I'll beat them all yet."

He was undecided what to do for a while.

"I ought to see what that fellow I gave money to has done to earn it. If he kept on his trail he may have gone up to Redfern. I will run up there and take a fresh start. If she is down here in the city, he may be here too. Hanged if I don't see if I can't get up a disguise that will fool 'em all up at Redfern."

He was quick to make up his mind about anything, and in a few minutes was hunting around in quest of a costumer.

Such persons can always be found in New York, and old Jack did not lose much time in making known his wants to one.

"I don't want to look any older than I am," he said, "but so different that even my best friend won't know me."

The costumer eyed him closely for a minute or so and then said:

"You want to cut your hair short and wear a wig and beard."

"Yes, that's what I think," said Jack. "Where can I get it cut?"

"Right here, in the back room," and the costumer led the way into a rear room, where the blacksmith seated himself in a barber's chair.

The costumer went to work at his head, and in a little while had his hair cut down to the right length.

Then he brought several wigs and tried them on. Each one differed in color from his natural hair, and made him look like another man altogether.

"Now, when you put on this beard you won't know yourself in the glass," said the costumer, adjusting the beard to the blacksmith's face.

Jack glanced at himself in the glass and was surprised at what he saw.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "I don't believe my best friend would know me."

"No; of course not," said the costumer. "You will be safe enough in that."

He paid the bill and then went away, satisfied that he could now work up the clew he had without being recognized by any man Pelham might hire to watch him.

Before leaving the city he again went to headquarters and inquired for the detective he had employed.

"He is out of town," replied the man in charge of the office.

Jack was then satisfied that the man was at work, and so took the train for Redfern.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TEMPTER AT WORK AGAIN.

The news of old Jack's arrest of Pelham and marching him to the railroad station at the muzzle of his revolver naturally created the greatest excitement ever known in the village of Redfern.

A crowd had gathered at the station to see them off; a dozen or more jumped on the train to follow them up and see the end of the affair.

The end was seen in the city, after which Pelham and the others went back on the next train.

"Of course I am innocent of the charge he made against me," said Pelham, on the way back, "but he is crazy, and I saw that the only way to save my life was to pretend to humor him and make him believe I knew where she was. It was a nice little bit of strategy, you know."

"Yes; and it worked like a charm, too," said the clerk who had telegraphed ahead for the detectives to meet them at the train and arrest the blacksmith.

He had no chance to get off at the home of his parents, so the train carried him past on the way to Redfern.

There he was met by a large number of the villagers, who were eager to get the latest news from his own lips.

"He is locked up as a lunatic down in the city," he said, in answer to many questions as to what had become of the blacksmith.

"Then he won't come back here?" said one.

"I don't say that," he replied. "He may come back here when he gets free."

"Which will be a long time," said another. "They don't let lunatics out very readily."

"But Jack isn't a lunatic by any means," said one of the bystanders.

"No; but the people think he is," replied Pelham.

"But the people have nothing to do with keeping him there," said a lawyer who had been retained by old Jack to defend Willie Waterman. "If you don't appear against him, he'll be discharged to-morrow."

Pelham made no reply, as he did not care to give his reasons for not confronting the old man in court.

During the very day that old Jack was released down in New York the lawyer who had taken Willie's case in hand went to work and had his client brought up before the court, when he demanded his release on the ground that the plaintiff was dead, and that there was no evidence on which to sustain the charge against him.

The court, after ascertaining the facts in the case, ordered the prisoners to be set free, and thus he came out in high spirits.

Willie ran home and embraced his mother, and then said he'd go in search of his sister, and never rest till he had found her.

"My son," said the sorrowing mother, "all of our ills have come from your drinking. Had you never touched liquor we would have been happy yet in our old home."

"Mother, I'll never drink another drop of liquor as long as I live," said Willie.

"I should not think you would, my son, after the experience you have had. If you should I don't think I could survive it. My heart is almost broken now."

Willie stopped at home over night and the next day went in search of Henry Pelham.

He wanted to look him in the face and ask him where his sister was.

"I think I would know if he lied to me," he said, "and so I'll go and ask him."

He found Pelham in his office, where Jack Murray had found him two days before.

Pelham was astonished and looked hard at him for a moment. "Pelham," said Willie, "they tell me that you know where my sister is."

"They tell you a lie, Willie," replied Pelham.

"But they say you acknowledged it to Jack Murray."

"So I did. A man will acknowledge anything at the muzzle of a six-shooter."

"You don't know where she is, then?"

"No; I don't."

Willie turned sorrowfully away and was about to leave the place when Pelham called to him:

"Come back, Willie."

Willie turned and looked at him.

"Willie," said Pelham, "times have been hard with you of late. If you want a situation any time come to me and I'll give you work."

Willie's eyes filled with tears.

"I never go back on a friend, Will," said Pelham. "Here, come into my private office," and he led the way into the private office, where he closed the door behind him.

"Will, old Jack Murray is not running the Waterman family, is he?"

"No, of course he isn't. Who said he was?"

"Why, everybody in Redfern is wondering what he is kicking up such a fuss about Nettie for. They know that he paid your father's funeral expenses, and that has set them all talking again. If I were you I'd put a stop to all that."

"He is my friend—that's all," replied Willie.

"But they seem to think he is more of Nettie's friend, and that will hurt her, you know."

"Yes; I never thought of that."

"Well, put a stop to it at once. Tell him his assistance is not needed, and then when you need help come to me. Here, take a pull at that and see how it tastes."

He set a bottle of old brandy before him.

Willie recoiled.

"No," he said; "I don't want to drink any more. I had better let it alone altogether."

"Nonsense! You are man enough to drink or let it alone," and he drew the cork. "There, taste of that if you want something good," and he thrust the bottle up under his nose.

Willie moved back toward the door, as if to get further away from the temptation.

"Try it—it's good—just one drink," said Pelham, following him up with the bottle.

Willie at last took the bottle in his hand and turned the bottom up toward the ceiling.

"Ah! he ejaculated, as he handed it back, "that is good stuff. Where do you get it?"

"I have it sent up from the city. Would you like to have a bottle of it?"

"Yes; of course I would."

"Well, I'll give you one. But look here, Will, don't go and get drunk again."

"Oh, no; I never intend to get drunk again."

"Well, stick to that and drink like a gentleman—a little at a time. It will do you good when taken in that way."

He wrapped up a bottle of the liquor and handed it to him.

"When you want a bottle of good stuff come to me. I never go back on a friend, you know."

Willie took another pull at the bottle and then thrust it into his pocket.

"If you see Jack Murray," said Pelham, "tell him to take a drop on himself."

"Hanged if I don't!" replied Willie. "He's getting too fresh, anyhow."

Willie went away from the mill not caring much whether he ever heard from Nettie again. He had taken two drinks of very strong brandy, which made him feel comfortable enough to forget all the ills of life.

An hour later he was seeking a quiet place on the river bank where he could enjoy the bottle at his leisure and without interruption.

CHAPTER XIX.

NOT DROWNED, BUT DRUNK.

Willie Waterman had scarcely left the mill office when Henry Pelham exclaimed, rubbing his hands with delight:

"That settles him. He'll get himself into another scrape before night. I shall have no further trouble with him. Wish I could dispose of Jack Murray as easily."

He did not calculate without reason, for the young man whom he had thus tempted away from the search for his missing sister soon became oblivious to everything save the fact that he had a bottle of fine old brandy.

A desire to have it all to himself as long as it lasted prompted him to seek a secluded spot down on the river bank, where, secure from observation, he could indulge in drink to his heart's content.

All thought of his beautiful sister had gone. The first two drinks he had taken had rekindled the fiery thirst, and to gratify that was the one great desire of his heart.

Seating himself near the water's edge, he drew the cork and took a copious drink of the fine liquor.

"Ah, this is the best stuff I ever drank!" he exclaimed, smacking his lips with supreme satisfaction. "If I could get such stuff as this to drink every day I wouldn't mind how much hard work I had to do. To work hard every day and have poor food and still poorer drink is a hard life to live. What a blessed thing it is that a man can sometimes find solace for his troubles in a bottle of something good like this! Ha, ha, ha!" Pelham said that whenever I wanted something good to drink to call on him. I'll do it, and this is the first call."

He drank several times and grew maudlin drunk.

Stretching himself at full length on the little narrow strip of sand that fringed the water at that point, he was soon soundly sleeping the sleep of inebriation.

When he had been sleeping about an hour one of the immense steamers that ply up and down the river came along.

In going up stream the steamers frequently hug the shore on one side or the other, according to the force of the current. On this particular day the steamer passed near the shore where Willie Waterman was lying.

The great wheels sent the waves shoreward with such force as to dash the water over him as completely as if he had been entirely submerged.

Twice—thrice did they dash over him, and as they receded almost carried him into the stream.

The fourth wave did carry in his half-empty bottle, and it floated away with the current.

But no sailor was ever washed ashore from a wreck more thoroughly drenched than Willie Waterman was.

Yet he was so deeply intoxicated that he was no more conscious of it than a log would have been.

It was soon after this that a couple of boys fishing along the banks of the river came across him.

"Gewhillikens!" exclaimed one of them, "there's a dead man!"

"Yes; drowned!" gasped the other.

Terror-stricken at the sight of a dead man lying there all alone in their path, the two boys took to their heels and ran up into the village to spread the news.

"There's a dead man down there by the river!" exclaimed one of the boys, rushing into Deacon Collins' store.

"Eh? What's that?" exclaimed the deacon. "A dead man, did you say?"

"Yes, sir; drowned!" replied the boy, almost out of breath.

"Well, we must see about that," said the deacon, putting on his hat and going out. "I'll get two or three men and go down there."

The other boy had spread the news so industriously that the deacon found a dozen men out on the same errand as himself.

The two boys, now reinforced by a dozen others besides the men, led the way down to where they had found the supposed dead man.

"There he is!" cried one of the boys the moment they caught sight of him.

The whole party stopped and gazed at the prostrate figure, and then the deacon led the way to the spot.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed one of the men. "It's Will Waterman!"

"Yes," said the deacon; "it's poor Will. He must have been drunk and fallen into the water. Well, I always thought he would come to some bad end. The poor fellow could not give up drink."

"Yes," said another; "but it will go hard with his poor old mother."

"So it will—just as her daughter turns up missing, too."

"I never heard of a family having such hard luck," remarked another.

"Nor I. What a pity he did not float down the river and save the town the trouble and expense of his burial."

"It would have been better," said the deacon; "but as he did not, we will have to bury him."

A boy was sent for the coroner and undertaker.

Both came together.

The coroner looked at the body a while and said:

"Take him up to the undertaker's, and we'll hold the inquest there this afternoon," and he proceeded to summon a jury then and there.

A rude stretcher was provided and the inanimate body placed thereon.

As they started up the hill the supposed dead man drew up one leg, as if seeking a more comfortable position.

"Gosh Almighty!" gasped one of the men who were carrying the stretcher, "he ain't dead!"

"Thunder, no!" cried another.

"We may save him yet. Run for the doctor!"

A half dozen men ran for Dr. Squills at once.

They found him in his little office and at short notice soon had him racing back with them.

"He isn't quite dead yet, doctor," said Deacon Collins. "You may be able to save him."

The doctor looked at the man on the stretcher in profound silence for two or three minutes. Then he felt of his pulse, sounded his chest, looked at the pupils of his eyes and shook his head.

"Any hope for him, doctor?" the deacon asked.

"He's dead," replied the doctor.

"Dead?"

"Yes; dead—drunk," said the doctor, turning away and walking deliberately back to his office.

The deacon and other citizens looked at Willie, and then at each other, whilst astonishment and disgust played over their features.

Suddenly one of the men who had carried the stretcher up the hill to where they were, in the middle of the street, exclaimed:

"Spill the duffer out!"

Instantly one of the party overturned the stretcher and Willie rolled over on the ground.

The men then went away and left the small boys in charge of the dead-drunk.

But ere Deacon Collins reached his store a dozen men cried out:

"Any hope for him, doctor?"

The roar of laughter that followed riled the deacon worse than anything that had happened in a year.

He made no reply, but ran into his store and shut himself up in the rear room.

A few minutes after the doctor left a woman came running down the street in the direction of the place, crying wildly:

"My son—my son! Where is he?"

It was Mrs. Waterman, who had been told that Willie had been found drowned on the river bank.

She dashed through the crowd of boys and threw herself in a wild burst of grief on his body.

Such wails of despair as she sent up would have melted hearts of stone. No one but a mother can understand the depth of her woe. Her moans and heart-broken cries called a dozen kind-hearted men to her side.

"Mrs. Waterman," said one of the gentlemen, lifting her to her feet, "calm yourself. Your son is not dead."

"Oh, he is dead! He is dead!" she wailed, wringing her hands in despairing grief. "Oh, why cannot I die, too? Why am I left alone in the world?"

"Willie is not dead, ma'am," said another. "See there! He rolls over!"

A cry of joy escaped the poor mother as she saw him turn over on the ground.

"He is only drunk, ma'am," said the man, "and he'll be all right soon."

To the surprise of every one in the crowd the mother gave a scream and sank into the man's arms in a death-like swoon.

"My God!" exclaimed the deacon, who had run out again on hearing the shrieks, "she has fainted!"

She was borne to the drug store, where restoratives were applied.

"I say, boys, let's take Will home. You see he can't make it himself."

"Yes; for his mother's sake," said another.

Some one ran and fetched a wheelbarrow, and in another minute or two they placed Willie in it and began wheeling him toward home.

They found the door of his mother's rooms opened wide, just as she had left them when she received the news that he was drowned, and so carried him in and laid him on the floor.

Then they closed the door and came away, leaving him to the care of his mother when she should return.

CHAPTER XX.

JACK MURRAY TURNS DETECTIVE.

Let us now return to Jack Murray, whom, the reader will recollect, we left in New York so well disguised that even his best friend did not recognize him.

On learning that his detective was out of town Jack set out to return to Redfern.

"He may be on Pelham's trail somewhere," he muttered to himself, "and I'll go back and see if I can't catch on to that old bummer mesmerist. If a hair of the girl is harmed, I'll tear that old villain's limbs apart."

He took the next train for Redfern and soon reached the village.

Of course nobody there knew him in his disguise, and he walked down the street to the Village House and registered there as:

"J. Murray, New York."

They gave him one of the best rooms in the house and saw that he did not lack for attention.

"What's the news here, landlord?" he asked, taking a seat on the piazza after washing off the dust of travel.

"Nothing new to-day, sir," replied the landlord, "but we've had some pretty lively times here lately."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. We are coming ahead, I think," and then the loquacious landlord told him the story of the Waterman family, winding up with the ludicrous mistake about Willie Waterman's death the day before.

"What a pity the lad can't keep sober," remarked the stranger.

"Yes," assented the landlord. "I think his drinking is what killed his father."

"It seems as if he can't control his appetite, then," said the newcomer.

"It would seem so."

"Then why don't the citizens here rise up and destroy the saloons and remove the danger from the pathway of such men?"

The landlord glared at him in amazement.

"Close up the saloons!" he exclaimed. "Why, sir, this a free country—yes, sir, a free country."

"So it is," assented the newcomer, "and yet we have more laws restraining a man's liberty than any other country in the world."

"I—I—don't understand you, sir," said the landlord.

"We have more laws than any other country," repeated the guest, "and nearly all of them say 'you shall not do this or that thing,' thus restraining a man's liberty, and yet you brag about its being a free country. Our freedom is in simple self-government—that's all."

"We like it, for all that."

"So do I, but there is room for improvement. We want laws that protect people from danger from whatever source. If we had laws prohibiting saloons we would not have had the story of the Waterman family, perhaps."

"Oh, we don't want any prohibition in ours," sneered the landlord, rising to get away from his guest.

"But you have it already," replied the guest.

"The deuce we have!"

"Yes; there is a law prohibiting the sale of liquor anywhere in this state without a special license granting the privilege. That is prohibition pure and simple."

"So it is, but the license knocks all that in the head."

"Yes—but it's prohibition as far as it goes. Laws are supposed to protect lives and property of the people. That young man's life has not been protected as it ought to have been, and he——"

"Oh, I don't care to listen to a temperance lecture," said the landlord, turning and walking away from his guest.

"I will spare you that by not delivering the lecture," said the guest, smiling. "But come back and tell me what became of the young lady who is missing."

"Nobody knows."

"What became of the young man who was accused of abducting her?"

"Oh, he is here in his office every day."

"Is he here now?"

"Yes."

"What became of the old mesmerist who was also accused of being his tool in making the young girl's brother a drunkard?"

"That I can't say. He has not been seen about here for several days."

Just then a customer came in, and the landlord turned to give him his attention.

Old Jack soon strolled away from the tavern and went in the direction of the Pelham Mills.

He wanted to get another look at Henry Pelham and see if he could observe any signs of guilt about him.

On his way, when near the mills, he caught sight of the detective he had employed in New York to watch Pelham.

The sight startled him.

"By George! the fellow's faithful after all!" he said to himself. "I must speak to him and find out what he has picked up since he went on the case."

He walked up to the man and called him by name.

"How does it work up?" he asked.

The detective eyed him closely and said:

"I don't know you, sir."

"I thought not," and Jack smiled. "I think my disguise is very good."

"Who the deuce are you?"

"I am Jack Murray, the man who employed you in New York the other day."

"Oh, I know your voice now," and the detective grasped his hand and shook it warmly.

"What have you found out?"

"I followed him back up this way and saw him stop at a fine old stone mansion below here some ten miles. I found out that it is the home of his parents; but they are in Europe now."

"Eh? Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Did you see a young woman there?"

"Yes; but she was a domestic, for she was dusting the rooms and singing as merrily as a lark. Then I saw the old housekeeper, and heard him call her Becky at the door."

"Did he stay there long?"

"No—only about half an hour or so, and then came on here."

"Did you see any other man about the place?"

"Yes; there was a man there whom he talked with all the time he was there."

"What kind of a man was he—tall, short or stout?"

"He was tall, thin, and had a beard and a red nose."

"Beard and a red nose—let me see," and Jack scratched his head, as if trying to think of something that persisted in escaping his memory. "Beard and red nose—I don't know such a man. That old bummer had a red nose, but no beard."

"Neither did you have a beard the other day," remarked the detective.

"Ah! What a fool I am for not thinking of that before! Yes, his nose is the professor's, but the beard is a false one, like mine. I say, old fellow, just hang on to this trail and I'll run down and see what I can find out about the girl."

"I am in your employ," said the detective, "and will do just whatever you say."

"That's right, and I'll pay you for everything you do," and old Jack shook hands with him as he was about to leave.

But before Murray reached the depot he ran across Willie Waterman, who was staggering along the street under a heavy load of strong drink.

He stopped and looked at him, wondering if there was no way for him to be saved from the fate of a drunkard.

Willie came along and lurched against him.

"Young man," he said, catching him by the arm and wheeling him around, "you killed your father by drinking. Are you trying to murder your mother, also?"

Willie was astonished.

The voice was familiar to him, but the face was utterly unknown.

"Eh? Whazzer mazzer?" he replied, looking hard at his questioner.

"The matter is that you are drunk again," replied Jack. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Gimme (hic) er drink," said Willie. "I'm dryer'n a (hic) fish."

"Who gave you your drinks?"

"Henry (hic) Pelham," he said. "Henry's er (hic) good fellow."

"Willie Waterman," said Jack, sternly, "you want to sober up and search for your poor sister, instead of bumming around the saloons."

"Eh? She's (hic) all—all right!" muttered Willie, too drunk to know what he was saying.

The whistle of the train was heard and Jack hastened toward the little depot in order to be on time.

"He is past redemption," he said, as he boarded the train. "It's no use to waste any time on him. The men who tempted him to his ruin ought to be punished in some way."

The train swept on down toward the metropolis, and in a little while reached the next station, which was about a mile from the Pelham mansion.

Old Jack was somewhat familiar with the country, and so had no difficulty in knowing which way to go after the train left.

He took the road and made his way on foot toward the old stone country seat. He had not been down that way for a long time, and was interested in many things he saw on the tramp.

When he arrived at the place he walked boldly up to the front gate, entered and passed up the graveled walk to the broad piazza, where a man was seated smoking a pipe.

The two men eyed each other suspiciously for a minute or two, when Jack spoke.

"Good afternoon, professor!"

The man sprang to his feet and glared at Jack in the greatest amazement.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DRUNKARD'S THIRST—WILLIE'S REPENTANCE.

The reader will recollect that Ben Morgan and a couple of friends carried Willie Waterman home after the widow swooned on the street when she heard that her son was drunk instead of being dead. The widow was carried into a drug store and attended by a physician and kind friends.

As soon as she was able to be moved Mrs. Waterman was carried home also.

When they reached the house they met Willie at the door.

He had so far recovered from his drunken stupor as to be able to walk, and his first thought was for his bottle of brandy, which he remembered having with him down on the river bank.

"How came my clothes so wet?" he asked himself, as he scrambled to his feet. "Where is my bottle of brandy? How did I get here, anyhow?"

Just then, as he started out in search of another drink, he was met at the door by the friends who were bringing his mother home.

"Hello, Will!" exclaimed one of the party, "where are you going?"

"I'm going out," was the gruff reply, as he tried to push past them.

"My son—my son," moaned his mother, as they laid her on the bed, "don't leave me! Don't leave your poor mother!"

"I'm coming right back, mother," he said, "I won't be gone long."

"Look here, Will Waterman," said one of the men, very energetically, "you want to stay here and take care of your mother. Your sister is gone no one knows where, and your mother is broken-hearted over her disappearance. To make matters worse you had to go and get blind drunk, thus leaving her all alone in her trouble. Now if you don't want a coat of tar and feathers from the men of this town you had better stop where you are and attend to your mother."

Willie was dumbfounded. He glared at the men and sank down into a chair.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," continued the citizen who had given him such plain talk. "She has been a good mother to you, and it's your duty to go to work and take care of her, instead of adding to her trouble. If you don't let up you'll get a coat of tar and feathers as sure as you sit there in that chair."

"Just gimme one more drink," said Willie, "and I won't touch another drop."

"One more drink! Why don't you drink water and sober up?"

"Oh, I'm burning up for one drink!" he moaned.

"Water will put out the fire," said the man, who really didn't know anything about the burning thirst that follows a heavy debauch.

Willie was left in the house with his mother, who was too weak and ill to hold her head up.

He sat there a long time in profound silence, thinking of what the man had said about a coat of tar and feathers.

"I wonder if they would do that?" he said. "Why don't they treat other men that way who get drunk sometimes?"

Just then his mother's groans in the next room attracted his attention.

"Willie, my son—my son!" she moaned, "come to me. I am dying!"

Willie sprang up in great alarm and ran to her bedside.

"Mother!" he called, in a choking voice, "what's the matter?"

"I am dying, my son," she feebly replied, her face ghastly white.

"Mother!" he gasped, terrified beyond measure, "you must not die! I'll run for the doctor!" and he seized his hat and bolted out of the room like a flash and reached the bottom of the flight of stairs at three bounds.

He flew along the street at the top of his speed and reached the physician's office just as the latter was about to leave in response to another call.

"Doctor, for God's sake go and see my mother!" he cried. "She is dying!"

"Do you know what the matter is?" he asked, eyeing him sternly.

"Oh, she's dying, doctor! For the love of God go and save her!"

"Will Waterman," said the doctor, solemnly, "no physician can cure a broken heart. Medicine cannot reach it. You have broken your mother's heart by your heartless conduct, and if she dies her friends will make Redfern too hot to hold you."

"But go and see her, doctor!" pleaded Willie, white as a sheet and trembling all over. "If she dies I will not survive her!"

The doctor drove away in the direction of the old red house in which they lived, and was soon at the bedside of the sick woman.

He soon saw that, while she was in a sinking spell, she was

by no means dying. He promptly administered the proper remedies, and then said to Willie:

"She may live, and then again she may not. The medicine she needs most is hope for the future in you. Her life depends upon your conduct altogether. I tell you, Will Waterman, if you were my son who was thus murdering his mother I'd give you a dose of arsenic!"

Will hung his head in shame and then burst into tears.

"That's a hopeful sign," muttered the doctor, as he turned away.

When the doctor was gone Willie knelt by his mother's bed and, burying his face in the bedclothes, wept as if his heart would break.

Mrs. Waterman gradually came out of the sinking spell and lay there with her hand resting on his head, listening to his sobs.

She prayed for him only as a mother could pray for a loved child, and never before did such bitter tears of anguish and remorse fall from Willie's eyes. Never before in all his life was he more sincere in his determination not to let another drop of liquor pass his lips.

As the mother continued to grow better Willie rose to his feet and looked at her.

"You are not dying now, are you, mother?" he asked.

"I am better now," she replied. "The doctor's medicine seemed to revive me. Oh, my son, my heart is broken. I cannot live much longer. I have seen you, my darling boy, lying drunk in the street, with a crowd of boys standing around jeering at you. Oh, God! Can I stand the disgrace of that scene?"

"Don't cry, mother!" he sobbed. "It shall never be again."

"You have said that before, my son. My poor boy is too weak or too bad, I don't know which."

"Mother, I swear before God that I'll never touch another drop of liquor as long as I live!" exclaimed Willie, driven almost to desperation by his mother's words.

"Oh, my son, if you would only keep that oath how happy it would make me! I could die content!"

"You must not die, mother," said he. "You must live and let me make you well and happy again."

As she grew better Willie grew lighter of heart and began busying himself around the rooms. The thirst for drink was so great, however, that he trembled all over like a leaf. He would look out of the window at one of the saloons down the street and wonder if just one drink would hurt him or do any harm.

By and by his mother asked for a cup of tea.

There was no tea in the house, neither was there any money with which to buy.

The fact stared him in the face that starvation was at hand.

"I'll go and ask Pelham to lend me some money," he said, and taking up his hat he was soon on his way to the mills to see the man who had tempted him to his ruin.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE VILLAIN STILL TEMPTS HIS VICTIM—UNDER THE TOWN PUMP.

Henry Pelham was seated in his mill office looking over his paper when Willie Waterman entered.

He looked at the young man in silence for a moment or two, as to assure himself that the visitor's intentions were pacific.

Then he laid down the paper and said:

"Good morning, Will."

"Good morning," returned Willie, rather timidly. "Can I see you a moment?"

"Yes, of course. Come in this way."

And the young mill owner led the way into the private office of the establishment.

Willie followed him and the door was closed behind him.

"What can I do for you?"

"I—I—want to borrow some money till I can get work," stammered Willie. "We haven't a thing in the house to eat."

"Oh, is that all? How much do you want?"

"Only a dollar or two," replied Willie, afraid of a refusal if he asked for more.

"Certainly—here's five dollars. Get everything you need. One can't get along without something to eat. Have you heard anything of your sister yet?"

"No; not a word," stammered Willie, taking the money. "I can't leave mother to hunt for her."

"How is your mother, and how does she take her disappearance?"

"She is very sick, and moans and cries for Nettie all day long," replied Willie.

"Have you seen anything of Jack Murray in a day or two?"

"No."

"Don't know where he is?"

"No."

"Well, you want to keep an eye on him. He knows more about Nettie's whereabouts than you think. He has not been such a generous friend for nothing. Here, have a drink with me."

"I—I don't think I—I ought to drink any more," said Willie, half hesitatingly.

"Why not, pray?"

"Because I—er—don't think I ought to," was the reply.

"Nonsense! I won't give you a whole bottle, as I did the other day, for I understand you went off and got blind drunk on it. Here, take one drink and brace up on it. It will do you good. You can then go and buy your provisions," and he poured a glass half full of fine brandy and gave it to him.

Willie backed away, as if his better judgment had asserted itself. But the next moment he took the glass and swallowed its contents.

The fiery liquor coursed through every fiber of his system, and in a few minutes he felt like a new man.

"There, now," said Pelham, as he received back the glass, "what's the use of getting drunk? When that dies away take another and keep on your feet like a gentleman. Go and make your purchases now, and if you hear anything of your sister let me know. I am very anxious to know what has become of her."

Willie turned and left the office, clutching the money he had received in his hand.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Pelham. "That drink will start him off on another spree and the money will enable him to keep it up. When the mother is carted off to the poorhouse and the son run out of the village, she will listen to me. They can't hold out much longer. Willie goes downward step by step as fast as I would have him go. He has nearly reached bottom. A little while longer and he'll get there."

The scheming young mill owner had reasoned like a philosopher.

The one drink of brandy he had given the young machinist set the fiery thirst all aflame again.

Willie felt as if he must have another drink.

"Just one more drink," he said to himself. "I'll feel much better, and then I'll go to the grocer's and buy some tea, sugar and other things for mother. How glad she will be when she sees them in the house. Pelham is a good fellow, and not in the least stuck up because he is rich. Hanged if I don't go to work for him to-morrow and see if I can't get a start and make a fortune like his."

He went into a saloon and called for a drink of the best brandy.

Fine brandy was worth double ordinary whisky, and he was in doubt about his customer's financial ability to pay for such expensive fluids.

Willie intuitively divined his thoughts, and, throwing the five-dollar bill on the counter, said:

"Give me some of your best brandy. I'm in a hurry."

The barkeeper was amazed.

He set a bottle of good brandy before him and shoved out a glass and drew in the bill.

Willie poured out a big drink and gulped it down whilst the barkeeper made change.

Thus fortified, Willie went out, pocketing his change, feeling as rich as Vanderbilt and Gould combined.

The brandy worked rapidly, and, instead of buying provisions to carry home to his sick mother, he went off up the street to another saloon, intending to have one more drink before going home.

Alas for poor humanity!

He went from one saloon to the other, till he had visited every one in the village, by which time all thought of his mother and her helpless, starving condition had passed out of his mind.

He drank deeply, and by and by sank down on the floor in a corner of one of the saloons.

During all this time, Mrs. Waterman, too weak to rise, lay in bed waiting for her son to return and make her a cup of tea. But he came not, and late in the afternoon a kind neighbor came in to see how she was and inquire for news of Nettie.

She told in whispers how long she had been there alone waiting for Willie to return with tea and sugar.

The visitor was astonished.

She ran home and soon returned with a tray of good things for the invalid.

She sent word to other neighbors and some of them came to help the heart-broken mother. One of them reported that Willie was in a drunken stupor on the floor of one of the saloons down by the river front.

The news soon spread that he had left his sick mother to starve, while he had money with which to fill himself with whisky.

"See here," said one indignant citizen, "we want to make an example of this young man."

"Yes," said another, "and the sooner we do it the better."

A committee of half a dozen men went to the saloon and dragged him out to the village pump.

He had partially recovered and was very thirsty for another drink.

"Come on! You shall have all you can drink," said one of the men, pulling him to the pump. "Somebody work the handle of that pump. We are going to wash all the liquor out of him!"

Two stalwart men seized the handle of the pump and worked it vigorously.

Two more seized Willie and held him under the spout.

"Ugh! Don't!" cried Willie.

"Drink! Open your mouth and take it all in! It won't cost you a cent! Give him all he wants, boys!"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Willie, struggling desperately to get from under the cold deluge of water.

But they held him there and the water dashed over him as if laughing mockingly at his sufferings.

"Ugh! That'll do! Oh, Lord, do you want to kill me?" he cried.

"Oh, no! We want to give you enough to drink, though. Have you got any of it inside of you yet?"

"No—let me up!"

"Oh, then you must have some," and they turned him with his face upward, so the water could strike his mouth.

He struggled hard, but was helpless as an infant in his tor-

mentors' hands. They held him there with relentless persistence, the stream pouring steadily into his face.

He yelled, then sputtered like a strangling man when the water dashed into his mouth.

Great quantities of water found its way down his throat, and in a little while he was the sickest man they ever saw.

Dragging him out from under the pump, they let him lie on the ground, groaning and writhing.

Then he disgorged water and whisky in copious quantities.

"That's the way to get all the drunk out of him," said one of the party. "Put him under again. He hasn't half enough yet," and they seized him again and proceeded to place him back under the spout.

"Oh, don't—don't—for God's sake don't!" he pleaded. "It will kill me!"

"Better be killed by water than whisky," said one. "Water is free, whisky costs money! Under with him, boys!"

They thrust him under again, and the cold water drenched him as he was never drenched before. He yelled and kicked, but without avail. Then he began to beg, and never did one beg more piteously.

It is impossible for one who has never tried it to conceive the severity of the pump punishment.

A shower bath is very pleasant for a few minutes—after that it is not so much so. When one has enough he wants to quit. But to continue to take it against the will the most horrible punishment that could be inflicted is preferable to it.

"Murder! murder!" screamed Willie at the top of his voice, and then some one would grasp him by the hair and pull his head backward till the relentless stream of water would strike him full in the mouth.

Again he was forced to swallow the water till he was utterly waterlogged, as the sailors say.

Oh, how sick he was!

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned. "I am drowned! I am killed!"

"Well, it serves you right, you heartless wretch!" cried one of the men in the party. "You left your sick mother at home to starve and came out to spend money for drink."

"Oh, I'll never drink another drop as long as I live," he groaned.

"Oh, we've heard that before. Put him under again, boys."

He fell down on his knees and begged so hard, promising never to touch liquor again, that they let him up and released him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WILLIE RESISTS TEMPTATION.

On being released Willie staggered to his feet. He was perfectly sober—never more so in his life—but was sick and ashamed beyond measure.

White as a sheet and drenched to the skin, he staggered away toward his humble home a sadder and wiser man.

But he did not forget that he came out to buy provisions for his mother, and stepping into a grocery, he bought such things as he thought were needed, finding about three dollars in silver change in his pocket with which to pay for them.

Whilst he was on his way home Deacon Collins, who was present at the pump meeting, called out to the crowd:

"Fellow citizens, we want to follow this thing up and warn the liquor sellers in this town not to sell him liquor, under penalty of the pump."

"Yes—yes—that's so!" cried half a hundred men in chorus.

"If they would not sell him drink he would soon let it alone," exclaimed the deacon. "He was a good boy till they tempted him to drink. His drinking killed his father and caused the ruin of the family. I move that we give any liquor seller a dose of the pump who sells him a drink of liquor after this day."

The crowd yelled itself hoarse over the motion, and the news ran through the village like wildfire, and the barkeepers saw that the people meant business.

Willie reached home as soon as the groceries did, and his mother did not know but what he had been away all the time trying to get the money.

"Mother," he said, going to the bedside and taking her hand in his, "I bought some tea, sugar and other things. Here they are. I am sorry I was gone so long."

"I am so glad you have come back," said Mrs. Waterman; "but you are wet. Where have you been?"

"I have been in the water, mother," he answered, "but I am all right now."

"Did you fall into the river?" she asked, with a mother's solicitude.

"Oh, never mind that now, mother. You see I am all right now. I'll change clothes and tell you all about it when you feel better. Shall I make you a cup of strong tea?"

"She has had all she ought to have just now," said Mrs. Deacon Collins, who was watching by the bedside. "The neighbors brought her something to eat."

Willie turned away and went into his room, where he changed his wet clothes for a suit of dry ones.

When he came out he was white as death and looked too ill to stand on his feet.

Mrs. Collins' heart was touched; she poured him a cup of warm tea and said:

"Drink this cup of tea. I think it will do you good."

"Ah! This is good!" he said, as he drank the last drop in the cup.

"Have another cup!" she suggested.

He held out the cup.

She poured it full of tea and then asked in a whisper:

"How did you get so wet?"

"Don't you know?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, the men of the town found me drunk and put me under the pump, keeping me there till I was nearly dead. I have had enough. I'll never drink another drop as long as I live. Oh, it was awful."

"Will you keep that promise?"

"Yes—or kill myself."

"You need not do that. Keep that promise for your mother's sake, Will."

"Yes—I will or die," and he repeated the alternative with such force as to make even the deacon's wife believe that he was at least sincere.

"You look ill?"

"Yes, I am very sick," and he sank down into a chair.

"Try to keep up, for your mother's sake!" whispered Mrs. Collins, "and you'll soon feel better."

"Yes, I will," and he made an extra effort. In another minute he was walking around the room and trying to shake off the disposition to throw himself down and give way to a hopeless despair.

Mrs. Collins remained till another lady came in, to whom she whispered:

"Don't let his mother know what has happened."

Then she went away.

Willie soon became too ill to stand up any longer.

He went to bed and the kind lady gave him a sleeping potion, and in a little while he was sleeping like an infant.

Watchers remained with the widow all night; but in the morning it was seen that both were much better.

Willie arose and busied himself about the house, making a fire to cook a light breakfast.

He made tea for his mother and carried it to her.

"I made it myself, mother," he said. "Drink and see if it is good."

She tasted it.

"Yes, my son; as good as any one could make it. Oh, if you would make it for me every day I would soon get well again."

"I'll make it for you every day, mother," he said, bending over and kissing her more affectionately than usual.

He then turned his attention to the house and cleaned up the rooms as well and neatly as his sister could have done. His mother watched him with a surprised feeling, not unmixed with joy. It seemed as if her life was coming back to her again, to see how attentive he was to her every want.

At noon he went out on the street and walked down to the water's edge. But nobody spoke to him, for which he was very grateful. His humiliation was so great that he did not care to speak to any one.

On his way back to his humble home a boy came up to him and put a piece of paper into his hand.

He looked at it and read:

"WILL: If you want to go to work in the mill you can do so, but you must let liquor alone."

"HENRY PELHAM."

Will looked at the paper in profound silence for a couple of minutes. Then he thrust it into his pocket and wended his way homeward.

"I won't work for him," he muttered to himself, "for he is the man who has tempted me to drink time and again. No; I can get work elsewhere, or will go away from Redfern. Oh, if sister were only here to look after her I would go away from the scene of my disgrace."

He was in this frame of mind when he entered his humble home and proceeded to his mother's room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NETTIE'S RESCUE BY JACK MURRAY.

Let us now return to Jack Murray, whom we left in search of the missing Nettie Waterman.

The reader will recollect that he was disguised so as to defy recognition.

The mesmerist was also disguised, but his crimsoned nose gave him away to the shrewd blacksmith the moment he saw him.

Jack greeted him on the piazza as professor and was met by a cold stare of astonishment.

"I don't know you, sir," said the mesmerist, "and I am not a professor."

"Well, I know you are not a professor," replied Jack. "You are a humbug, an old fraud. My name is Jack Murray," and he tore off his beard and wig to verify his words—"perhaps you know me now."

The mesmerist staggered back as if stricken a stunning blow and thrust his hand into his pocket as if to draw a weapon of some kind.

Jack did not wait for him to draw. He was too alert for that. He sprang forward and clutched him by the throat, hissing in his ear:

"If you give me any trouble I'll crush you as I would a flea!"

Jack snatched the beard and wig off the villain's head and made sure of his man.

Then he gave him time to catch his breath.

"Where is that girl?" he demanded, the moment he saw the man was able to speak.

"Wha—what girl?" the mesmerist asked, as if surprised at the question.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Jack. "If you trifle with me I'll not leave a whole bone in your body. Where is that girl, sir?"

"I—don't—know what you mean."

Whack!

A blow from Jack's fist laid him out again at full length on the floor.

Just then the door opened and the old housekeeper appeared, attracted by the noise of the scuffle on the piazza.

She screamed at the top of her voice.

"Keep quiet, old lady," said Jack, "and no harm will come to you."

"Murder! murder!" screamed the old woman at the top of her lungs, and the hired man came running up to see what the trouble was.

"John, John!" said the mesmerist, "I am Judge Campbell."

The hired man recognized the voice of the guest of the house, but could not recognize the face after the beard and wig had been removed.

He glared at him in profound astonishment, and then at Jack.

"He's an old fraud," said Jack. "Just let me attend to him," and he seized him by the collar and jerked him toward the gate as if he were simply a schoolboy.

"John, John!" cried the mesmerist, "he'll murder me and all of you if you don't help me!"

Jack gave him a blow that stunned him to insensibility.

"Here! who are you, sir?" demanded the hired man, going up to Jack in a menacing way.

"Just wait till I tie him," replied Jack, "and I'll tell you the whole story."

The old housekeeper and two maids stood on the piazza and looked on at the proceedings.

"Now," said Jack, turning to John, the hired man, "my name is Jack Murray; I live in Redfern. I am looking for the young lady who was brought here by Henry Pelham and this old rascal——"

"Oh, you are, eh?" hissed John, making a spring at the blacksmith.

Jack was ready for him and gave him a blow that laid him out alongside the mesmerist.

When the hired man recovered his wits he found himself a helpless prisoner on the grass.

"Ladies," said Jack to the women, who kept up the screaming, "what are you making such a fuss about? No harm shall come to any of you. I am not a robber. I am come for the young lady who was brought here the other day. Turn her over to me and I'll go away at once."

"She is upstairs in her room," said one of the maids. "Oh, for heaven's sake go away!"

"I will as soon as I get her," replied Jack. "Show me the room she is in."

But the girl was too much frightened to do so, and Jack turned to the old housekeeper and said:

"If you don't want to go to state prison show me the way to that young lady's room at once."

His sternness overawed the housekeeper and she hastened to obey.

She led the way upstairs and Jack followed close at her heels.

Entering the room, Jack saw Nettie standing near a window. She turned her back and stared at him with an expression in her eyes that plainly showed she did not recognize him.

"Ah! she is still under mesmeric influence!" he exclaimed. "I'll break it or kill that old wretch out there on the grass. Come, Nettie! come home. Your mother waits for you."

But she simply stared at him, making no reply.

Jack stepped forward and took her in his arms like an infant. Then he led the way downstairs, the old housekeeper following him.

Out on the piazza the two young women were still screaming.

"Keep quiet!" sternly ordered Jack, and he strode forward, passed down the steps and bore Nettie to where the mesmerist lay bound on the grass.

Standing her on her feet, he drew his revolver and said to the mesmerist:

"I'll give you five minutes in which to break the spell on her. If you don't you'll be a dead man as soon as six bullets can kill you!"

The mesmerist was pale as death and stammered:

"Untie me and I will."

CHAPTER XXV.

A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT.

The mesmerist turned ashen-hued when he saw the weapon in the blacksmith's hands. He knew that Jack would not hesitate to shoot if provoked, and did not care to give the provocation.

"Don't shoot!" he tremblingly begged. "I can't break the spell till I get myself under control. I—I—am excited, you see!"

"Yes, I see you are; but you want to get over that as soon as you can."

"I will soon get over it if you will please put up that weapon. It might go off."

Jack smiled and put the weapon out of sight.

"Stand me on my feet," he said to Jack.

Jack stood him upon his feet near the maiden.

"All right! All right, Nettie!" he exclaimed, in very emphatic tones to Nettie.

Nettie started and looked hard at him for a moment, to see if she really understood him.

"All right! All right!" cried he again.

Nettie suddenly looked around with a bewildered expression on her face and exclaimed, rubbing her eyes:

"Why, where am I?"

"You are all right, Miss Nettie," said Jack. "I have come to take you back to your mother."

She sprang to his side and, clutching his arm, exclaimed:

"What's the matter? What has happened? How did I get here?"

"You were mesmerized and brought here three or four days ago," said Jack, "and I have just found you and compelled the wretch to break the spell on you."

"Oh, heavens!" and she glared around at the housekeeper and the two maids. "Where am I now?"

"You are at the home of Henry Pelham's parents," answered Jack.

"Are you his mother?" she asked, turning suddenly to the housekeeper.

"No; I am the housekeeper," she replied. "The family is in Europe."

She looked at Jack and said:

"I remember meeting Mr. Pelham on the street, and was talking to him when a man came up whom he introduced as Judge Campbell. I don't remember any more till now."

"That Judge Campbell was no other than the rascally old mesmerist who had done poor Will so much harm. He was disguised, and the whole thing was a job to get you in the power of Henry Pelham."

The old housekeeper here stepped forward and said:

"I am astounded to hear all this, sir. Mr. Pelham came here with that man and the young lady and said he was Judge Campbell and that she was his niece. That is all we knew about it here."

"I believe you," said Jack, and then, turning to John, the hired man, asked: "And what have you to say? Did you know anything about this business?"

"No—nor do I care anything about it," was the surly reply. "If you'll give me half a chance I'll take the freshness out of you in just two minutes."

"Jack turned to Nettie and said:

"Stand aside, Nettie, till I give the rascal the lesson he has neglected to learn in the past. I believe he knew all about his master's rascality, and I intend to give him the thrashing he deserves."

Nettie believed so implicitly in the rugged blacksmith that she stepped aside and saw him pull off his coat without uttering a word.

Jack cut the cords that bound John and the latter sprang to his feet like an enraged tiger.

In less than two minutes he was ready to give up, but Jack wouldn't let him.

"Stand up and take it like a man," said Jack. "I want to knock some of that freshness out of you."

"Oh, don't hit him any more," pleaded one of the chambermaids, with tears in her eyes.

"Do you think he has had enough?" Jack asked.

"Yes, sir; more than enough."

"You don't think it was very wrong to treat a lady so, then?"

"Oh, I don't think John knew any more about it than we did," replied the maid.

"Why did he attack me as he did, then?"

"I—I—really—don't know, sir," she stammered.

"I knew nothing about it," said John.

"Then why did you attack me as you did the moment I said I was looking for the lady?"

"Because I didn't believe your story," replied John.

"I believe you are lying," said Jack, "but as I've given you a lesson you won't soon forget, I'll let up on you. As for you, professor, I'm going to give you a trouncing that'll knock the mesmerism out of you."

"Please don't strike me," pleaded the wretch. "I'd rather have the law take its course."

"Oh, no. I'll draw your shirt and give you one hundred lashes on the bare back."

"Oh, don't do that here!" cried the women.

"No; I'll take him to the woods," said Jack. "Come on!" and he took the mesmerist by the arm and led him away toward the woods, across the road that ran by the gate.

Nettie went with him. She kept close by his side like a timid fawn, trembling like a leaf at every step.

"Stay here by the roadside," said Jack. "You do not wish to see the whipping."

"I'd rather see it than stay here alone," she replied.

"Come on, then. You may give him a few stripes yourself if you like."

"Oh, no."

But she went away with him and stood by listening to the wails of the wretch as he writhed under the merciless lash. His howls of pain and pleadings for mercy filled the woods.

Nettie turned her back on the scene and would not look upon it. But the merciless old blacksmith laid on the one hundred lashes and then let him go.

"Now we'll go back home," said Jack, tendering his arm to Nettie, who took it, and he led her toward the depot, a mile below.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NETTIE RESTORED TO HER HOME.

As she leaned on his arm on her way to the little station Nettie Waterman felt a sense of security such as she never experienced before.

The brave, strong old man had won her confidence by his rugged self-reliance and faithful devotion in his friendship.

They reached the station and waited there an hour for a train to take them to Redfern.

It came along, and just as they were about to get aboard Jack saw Henry Pelham get off, having run up from the city, whither he had gone to allay suspicion.

"Ah! there's Pelham. We will wait for the next train, Nettie."

Nettie said nothing.

She was willing to wait as long as he wished.

"Ah, Pelham!" exclaimed Jack, as he led Nettie up in front of him; "you see we are waiting for you."

Pelham staggered as if struck a heavy blow and turned deathly pale.

"You didn't expect to see us here, did you?" continued Jack, a sardonic smile on his face.

"Perdition!" gasped Pelham.

"Yes; that's it exactly," said Jack. "I have walloped your hired man and given 'Judge Campbell' one hundred lashes on the bare back. Now I am ready to settle with you," and the old blacksmith's eyes snapped as he spoke.

There were only a half dozen people about the little station after the train left, and they were too busy to look about much.

"We can settle the matter between us, can we not?" Pelham asked.

"Between you and I?" the blacksmith asked.

"No; between her and me. I am willing to make her my wife."

Old Jack Murray was astonished. He looked at Nettie, who was pale as death.

"I leave that with her," said he, after a pause.

"I will not marry him," said Nettie. "I would rather die than marry him."

"Sensible to the last!" exclaimed Jack. "He is not capable of making any true woman a good husband."

"Come back to the house," said Pelham, "and we can talk it—"

"No—no—no!" cried Nettie. "Not there—not there! Oh, Mr. Murray, do please take me home!"

"Yes—home it is. Henry Pelham, I'll see you in Redfern to-morrow. I am not afraid of your getting away. Do you see that man standing out there?"

Pelham glanced in the direction indicated and saw a man whom he had seen several times during the last two or three days.

"That man is a New York City detective," said Jack. "He has shadowed you ever since you played me that trick in the city the day I took you in charge. I have given him instructions to arrest you the moment you attempt to leave the country. I'll meet you in Redfern to-morrow at your office."

"I'll be there," said Pelham.

"Of course you will. You can't help yourself. Bribery won't help you in the least. On the contrary, it will only make your case worse. Come, Nettie, we must take the next train for home."

The train came along and Jack assisted her on board.

In a half hour's time they reached Redfern.

A score of people at the little depot recognized them.

By the time she reached her mother a dozen women were there to welcome her and hear her story.

"My child! my child!" cried her mother, as Nettie entered the door of their quarters.

"Mother!" cried Nettie, and the next moment she was clasped in her mother's arms.

Both wept long and hysterically and the neighbors could not restrain tears of sympathy.

Old Jack stood by and looked on with a sober self-control that moved one of the ladies to ask:

"Where did you find her, Mr. Murray?"

"At the house of an acquaintance. She has been safe all the time."

"But why did she go away in such a strange manner?"

"She can explain that at the proper time. Don't ask her any questions now. Let her and her mother be to themselves to-day."

The ladies took the hint and in a little while retired.

Jack started to leave also, but Nettie ran and brought him back.

"Mother," she said, "Mr. Murray saved me and brought me back. Oh, how can we ever thank him for what he has done?"

"He has been a friend to us, indeed," said Mrs. Waterman. "God knows how much I thank him, and how earnestly I pray that all the blessings of heaven may rest upon his head."

"I have tried to do what I thought was right," said Jack, "and don't think I deserve any thanks for that. Where is Will?"

"He went out a few minutes since," said Mrs. Waterman. "Oh, Mr. Murray, he hasn't touched a drop of drink in two days now, and is so kind to me!"

"Is that so?" exclaimed Jack, greatly surprised.

"Yes. I hear him coming up now."

Willie came upstairs on a run. He had just heard that Nettie had come back.

"Nettie! Nettie!" he cried, bounding into the room.

"Oh, brother!" and the next moment they were clasped in each other's arms.

"Where did you find her, Jack?" Willie asked.

"I'll tell you by and by, Will," said Jack. "How have you been?"

"Bad enough, Jack. They put me under the town pump day before yesterday."

"Good Lord!"

"Yes; it was awful, but it cured me. I'll never drink another drop as long as I live."

"Can you keep that, Will?"

"I am going to try very hard. The disgrace of the pump, to say nothing of the terrible punishment, was enough for me."

"You want to work hard and keep away from temptation," said the blacksmith. "You had better go to work for me."

"I will—and will stick to you as long as I can sling the hammer."

"Oh, what would we do but for you?" cried Nettie, turning to the blacksmith. "You have kept us from starving, saved me, and now we even earn the bread we eat at your hands."

"Don't talk about it," said Jack. "Try to think of something else. Will and I will go to work to-morrow morning."

"But I must work, too," said Nettie. "I can't let brother support me in idleness."

"Oh, you'll have enough to do at present in keeping house and nursing your mother. She needs good nursing more than medicine. Besides, the responsibility will make Will be more careful than he has been."

"Yes—stay here and nurse mother," said Willie, "and I'll do the outside work. People will talk you to death if you go out to work now."

"Well, I'll do as you say," and Nettie kissed her mother and brother in token of her satisfaction with the arrangement.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PELHAM MAKES AN EFFORT TO ESCAPE, BUT FAILS—HE PAYS FOR HIS WORK.

On seeing that he was shadowed by a detective, Henry Pelham beckoned to him after the train had left.

The detective looked at him in some surprise, and went to him.

"How much do you want to drop this thing?" Pelham asked.

"I want one thousand dollars," was the reply.

"I'll give it. Come to the house and I'll give you my check."

"I don't want any check. They could trace it up to me if I took a check. Give me the money and I'll drop it."

"Go to the city with me, then, and I'll get it."

"All right; I'll do that."

They took the next down train and in a couple of hours were in the city.

Pelham went to his banker and drew out one thousand dollars, which he gave to the detective.

"Good-bye," said the latter, "and be careful you don't give me away. I shall say you gave me the dodge."

"Yes. I won't say a word of this," returned the villain.

The detective walked away and Pelham breathed free again.

But he was not aware that the detective had given the cue to another, who began shadowing where the other left off.

"I shall get out of the country now," he said to himself, "and stay away till my lawyer settles the business for me."

He went to the Grand Central Depot and bought a ticket for Canada.

As he was about to enter the cars a man tapped him on the shoulder and said:

"You are wanted in Redfern, Mr. Pelham."

"Who the deuce are you?"

"I am a detective."

That was enough.

He then knew that he had no way of escaping his fate.

"Do you want to take me there?" he asked.

"I am to arrest you if you attempt to go anywhere else," was the reply.

"Very well; I'll go there."

"And I'll see that you do."

They both boarded another train, and in a couple of hours were in the village of Redfern.

Pelham went direct to the mill office and looked over his correspondence.

The next day old Jack Murray and his lawyer called on him in the private office of the mill.

At the same time the detective received notice from his partner that his job was finished.

The moment Jack Murray entered the office with his lawyer Pelham's heart sank like a lump of lead in his bosom.

"Are you ready to talk business, Henry Pelham?" the blacksmith asked.

"Yes. What are your terms?"

"Well, you'll pay the sum of \$10,000 or go up the river," said Jack.

"I'll pay half that."

"You will pay every dollar of it or go up the river. Then, in addition, you will pay \$500 detective fees. You might have been stripped of your fortune and worn a convict's suit in the bargain."

"How do I know that she will get the money and not prosecute?"

"You must take my word for that, and this gentleman here will attend to the writing. You are not in a position to either kick or ask questions."

Jack was too much for him, and in the end he agreed to pay the sum demanded.

"You want to send a messenger for the money," said the blacksmith, "and lose no time about it."

"The money is here in the mill safe," said Pelham.

"Very well. So much the better. We shall lose but little time."

"But I want to see her before I pay it."

"That you can't do. She will not see you again under any circumstances."

"I am to pay, then, without knowing whether she consents to the settlement or not?"

"You will have to pay on my promise that she will not prosecute," added Jack, "and no man in Redfern believes that Jack Murray would tell a lie."

The writings were drawn up and duly signed, and then the money was paid, the old blacksmith taking charge of it.

After they went away Pelham rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

"They could have claimed a much larger sum," he said, "for it was cheap for me at double the money."

The blacksmith went direct to the bank and placed the money to the credit of Nettie Waterman.

The banker was astonished, but made no remark.

From the bank he went to the home of the widow and sat down to talk with mother and daughter.

"Nettie has just finished telling me her story," said Mrs. Waterman.

"She did wise to tell you," he replied, "but you should not say anything about it to your friends yet a while. I have just left Henry Pelham and have settled the case with him."

"Settled it!" exclaimed the widow, "and he won't go to prison for it?"

"No. I made him pay the sum of \$10,000 to Nettie, and it is now in the bank to her credit. Here's the bank-book," and he handed the book to Nettie, who looked at it like one in a dream.

She could scarcely believe her eyes. Yet there were the figures, and she really had \$10,000 in the bank!

"Oh, mother!" she cried, springing up and throwing her arms around her mother's neck, "I am so glad for your sake. I do not regret suffering as I did now that you can have ease and comfort the rest of your days."

Tears of joy streamed down their faces, and when Willie came in he was made acquainted with the story.

Like any brother would have been under the circumstances, he was in a towering rage. But Jack reasoned with him, and in a little while he cooled down.

"But I'll thrash him if he ever speaks to me again," he said.

"You want to keep a good watch of yourself," said Jack, "and never forget that your drinking brought all the trouble on the family. Instead of watching Pelham, look out for yourself."

"Yes," said his mother; "let him alone and attend to your work."

"Hadh't we better move away from Redfern?" Willie asked.

"No," said Jack. "The pump story will follow you wherever you go. Stay here and live down the disgrace like a man."

"Yes," said Nettie. "You can have a shop of your own now. I want to see you live down the past."

"I'll do it," said Willie. "We'll move from this house, though."

"Yes; we'll buy a home now," said his mother.

The next day Willie and Jack went to work in the shop, as though nothing had happened to mar the current of their lives.

But the news of the abduction and settlement got out, and gossips all over the village flocked in every direction to pick up every little point afloat.

But Pelham would answer no questions and Jack looked ugly whenever the matter was mentioned to him. Willie would say nothing, but Mrs. Waterman soon admitted all, and then it became known that Nettie was worth \$10,000 in clean cash.

Then nearly every young man in the village began to pay court to her. They came at all hours and met her at every corner. But she would have none of them, and they sighed in vain for a smile.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WILLIE WATERMAN AND HENRY PELHAM MEET—A KNOCK DOWN.

A few days after Nettie Waterman returned home the family moved into a lovely cottage which overlooked the river and was surrounded by a beautiful flower garden. On every hand were beautiful flower beds, and several huge oaks cast a refreshing shade across the yard.

Nettie had purchased it at the suggestion of her mother, and they moved into it at once.

Mrs. Waterman soon recovered her health, for she saw her two children happy and contented once more.

Willie was working with Jack Murray, and had not touched a drop of strong drink since his terrible pump experience. He no longer went out of evenings, but remained at home.

Everybody knew and liked old Jack, and Willie had struggled so hard to get on that people were disposed to help him as much as possible.

While Willie was thus rising again in the social scale Henry Pelham was going down. Some of his best friends forsook him when the news came out about his abduction of Nettie Waterman. They were fathers of daughters, and did not dare receive him socially, for fear their wives would blow them up. He drank worse than ever, and several times was seen reeling through the streets of Redfern.

"He is going down," said old Jack one day, as he passed the shop.

"Yes," said Willie. "He will reap the harvest he sowed for others."

Willie had never spoken to him after Nettie's return, though Pelham had tried to renew his association with him.

Time passed on, and it was said that Pelham was under the influence of drink nearly all the time.

One evening Willie and Nettie were returning from a visit to some friends and met him on the street.

"Hello, Will!" he called, as he rushed forward to shake hands with him. "Glad to (hic) meet you. Letsh be (hic) friends, an—"

"Get out of my way, Henry Pelham!" said Willie, sternly, "and let us pass."

"Get out of (hic) your way!" yelled Pelham. "I'm a better man than the (hic) whole family of you!" and he snapped his fingers in Willie's face.

Quick as a flash of lightning Willie knocked him down, and then, taking Nettie's hand in his, said:

"Come on, sister. I've long wanted a chance to give him that blow. Come away quick, for I am afraid I'll do him harm if he gives me much provocation."

"Oh, I am so sorry you struck him, brother," said Nettie, running along by his side.

"Why?"

"Because the whole town will be talking about it to-morrow."

"Well, let 'em talk. They'll say I served him right."

"Yes; but I hate to have people mingling my name with his."

"So do I; but it can't be helped now. If I hadn't knocked him down he would have been insulting you in a week or two. The best way to do is to teach such men that they can't insult people with impunity."

The matter not becoming public, nothing more was heard of it, and Willie went on the even tenor of his way.

On the next Sunday evening, however, as Willie was returning from church—Nettie having remained at home on account of rain—he was seized by four men and hurried away in the darkness with great precipitation.

Willie resisted with all his might, but his arms were held by two strong men, whilst another behind pushed him on a run.

Four to one were too many, and he soon found it out.

"What does this mean?" he demanded, as they kept him on the run.

They made no reply, for fear of being known by their voices. He could see in the dark just enough to make out that their faces were black.

But he knew intuitively that they were not negroes, but white men with blackened faces. That discovery filled him with undefined fear. If they did not mean serious business why should they take such precaution even on a dark night?

Willie was alarmed, but cool.

He believed his life in danger, and resolved to sell it as dearly as possible. To throw them off their guard to some extent he made up his mind not to make any resistance till such time as he saw a chance to do so successfully.

Accordingly he ceased to resist and ran along with them across a field toward a piece of woods beyond.

When they spoke it was only in whispers, and Willie tried in vain to make out who they were.

Suddenly one of the men who had him by the arm stumbled and fell to the ground.

Quick as a flash Willie tripped the other one, knocking his feet from under him. But his own foot slipped and he fell with him.

As he fell his hand came in contact with a stone weighing some eight or ten pounds.

He clutched it with the eagerness of a drowning man grasping at a straw, and struck one of his assailants on the head with all his might.

The man uttered a groan and went down like a log.

The other three threw themselves on him and in a moment he was disarmed.

Then they proceeded to bind him, hands and feet.

"What does this outrage mean?" he demanded again.

They laughed at him, but made no reply.

Then he yelled:

"Murder! Help!" at the top of his voice.

"The deuce!" exclaimed one of the men. "Gag him and put a stop to that!"

They placed a gag in his mouth, and thus effectually put a stop to his speech.

"Now give me that can," said one, in a whisper, reaching out and taking a half gallon oil can from the one nearest him.

He inserted the small spout into Willie's mouth, under the gag, and began pouring its contents down his throat.

Willie knew from its taste and smell that it was whisky, and very poor stuff at that.

He refused to swallow it and let it run out of his mouth.

Then one of them held his nose to prevent breathing without swallowing.

"Ha—ha—ha!" chuckled one of the villains, in a low tone. "He likes it—listen how he swallows it!"

The fluid ran down his throat in a stream. He could not breathe without swallowing it, and by that means they succeeded in pouring enough down him to make three or four men drunk.

The gag was removed and he groaned under the terrible strain he had been subjected to.

Ten minutes later he was so much under the influence of the vile stuff that had been poured down his throat that he began to talk and threaten.

Then they laughed and no longer took pains to disguise their voices.

"That's the greatest drunk I ever saw," said one.

"Yes," said another, "and he'll keep it up of his own accord when he wakes up in the morning."

"Yes, that's so. We'll have to carry him, for his legs are as limber as if they had no bones in them."

"Well, take hold here—one for each arm and leg—and we'll soon get him there."

They took hold of him, and then discovered that one of their number was missing.

"Why, where's Tom?" one asked.

"Tom—Tom!" called one of the others.

"Why, where did he go?" one asked. "He was with us when we fell. Oh, I guess that's him there," and the man stepped back and touched a body with his foot.

One placed his hand over his heart and held it there for a minute or so.

Then he sprang up and exclaimed:

"Tom's dead, fellows!"

"What! Dead?"

"Yes; his heart doesn't beat. I remember now that Will hit him on the head with a stone just as we threw ourselves on him. He must have killed him with that stone."

"Shall we leave him here?"

"Yes—leave 'em both here—no, we must take 'em both down into the village and leave 'em lying near each other. It will look more like a quarrel and fight if we do."

They took up the two bodies and made their way down into one of the unfrequented streets of the village and laid them down near a rocky place and left them there.

Then they crept away in the darkness and were seen by no one in the village that night.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

After the villains left Willie where they laid him the pitiless rain came down in torrents. But such was the quantity of whisky they had forced down his throat that he was insensible to it all.

It was nearly daylight when he recovered sufficiently to know that he was lying on the ground in a pool of mud and water.

He was also conscious of a burning thirst such as he had never felt before. His head throbbed, too, as if it wanted to explode with a tremendous report.

He rose to his feet, the mud and water dripping from his Sunday suit of clothes as he did so, and staggered off down the street.

As he walked, or rather staggered along, he felt something bulky in his pocket. On feeling there he found a bottle.

It contained whisky.

He drew the cork and drank copiously of its contents.

Then he staggered away, going he knew not where.

By and by he sank down to the ground again, having been overcome by the liquor he had drank.

An hour later he was found there on the street by some workmen on their way to their daily labor.

"It's Will Waterman!" exclaimed one, in utter amazement.

"So it is," said another. "Lord, what a case of dead drunk it is."

"Jack Murray ought to know of this," said the first speaker.

"Poor Will! He's bound to die, it seems, in the gutter."

Murray's quarters were only a short distance away, and one of the men ran over there to tell him of Will's whereabouts and condition.

Old Jack was just getting up from his breakfast.

"Will drunk again?" he exclaimed. "It can't be!"

"But he is, and lying there on the street. I guess he's been there all night."

Jack went with the man and found that his story was true.

There lay Will in a dead drunk, and it looked as if he had lain there all night.

He took him up on his shoulder and carried him to his own room and laid him on the floor.

"It's bad business," he said, shaking his head. "The mesmerist cannot have been here, for Will knows him. I'm afraid Will is bound to go under in spite of all we can do. I'll hold on to him and give him one more trial."

An hour later Ben Morgan ran in and said:

"Have you heard the news? Tom Weeks has been found on Hill street dead as a herring, with his skull crushed in!"

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Jack, in dumbfounded amazement. "What's broke loose in Redfern, anyhow?"

Jack went to the drug store and procured some ammonia and prepared a drink that would sober up a man in ten minutes, if he could drink it.

He gave it to Willie when he got up, and in ten minutes he was as sober as he ever was.

"How's this, Will?" he asked.

Will looked at Jack, and then at his bedraggled suit.

"Jack," he said, "I've been very drunk."

"I should say so," returned Jack.

"But I didn't drink any liquor voluntarily, Jack," said Will, leaning on a corner of a table, "and I want you to believe me when I say so."

"Well, how did you drink it, then?"

"Through the spout of a can—a kerosene oil can, for I smelt the oil at the time. Last night, as I was going home from the church in a misty rain, I was seized by four men at the corner of River and Hill streets and rushed over the hill across the Benson field toward the woods. Just before we got to the woods I managed to see that they were white men with blackened faces. They spoke in whispers to keep me from recognizing their voices. One of them stumbled and fell. I tripped another and we went down together. My hand struck a stone as big as a cocoanut. I seized it and struck one of them on the head. I'll bet it killed him, for I felt the skull crush under it as I held the rock in my hand. The next moment they bound, gagged me and poured whisky down my throat till I was dead drunk."

"Good heavens, Will!" exclaimed Jack; "Tom Weeks was found dead this morning with his skull crushed just that way!"

"Tom Weeks?"

"Yes."

"Good Lord, what could Tom want to play me such a trick for? I never did him any harm in my life."

"You served him right, anyway. Did you recognize any one's voice in the party?"

"No; though I tried hard to do so; but they only spoke in whispers all the time."

"Well, I'll bet that Henry Pelham was at the bottom of the whole affair. They wanted to make you blind drunk and leave you in the public street so as to disgrace you. Pelham is after revenge for that knockdown you gave him the other night."

Jack went home with him and consoled the widowed mother with the assurance that Will was all right and not to blame.

Will changed his clothes and went out on the street with Jack. The population was very much excited over the mysterious death of Tom Weeks.

Willie met Judge Wilson and said he wanted to see him in his office. All three went there, and in a few minutes he put all the facts into the judge's possession.

They went to the spot where Willie said he was seized, and then followed the trail over the hill, finding traces now and then which the rain had not obliterated.

"Ah!" said Willie, coming to a stop near a rough place, "I think this is where we stumbled and fell."

"Here's signs of tracks in abundance," said the judge, looking around the spot.

"Ah! Here's a watch-key!" exclaimed Jack, picking up a gold watch-key.

"Yes, and I know it, too," said the judge, taking the key and closely inspecting it. "My own son gave it to Bill Allison last year. Here are Allison's initials—'W. J. A.'"

Willie and Jack looked at it in amazement.

They, too, recollected seeing Allison wearing the key on his watch-chain.

"It was torn off in the struggle," said the judge. "I think he will tell the whole truth when he is confronted with this."

They made their way down to the judge's office again, where Allison was sent for.

He came to the office as pale as death.

"Is that your watch-key?" the judge asked.

"Yes—that's mine."

"It was found where Tom Weeks was killed last night," said the judge. "What explanation have you to give?"

Here Allison broke down and gave the whole business away. Henry Pelham was one of the party and the instigator of it.

The judge called at the mill to see Pelham, but he was not in. The news spread that Allison had confessed. Pelham heard it and rushed to a train which was just coming in.

He made his escape from the country, leaving instructions to his attorneys to wind up his business for him.

The other two men were sent to state prison for a term of years for their participation in the assault on Waterman.

By the advice of his lawyer Willie sued Pelham for heavy damages. Pelham did not appear to defend it, and so the verdict was for Willie. He obtained a judgment for \$10,000 against him, and it was paid.

With that sum Willie went into a business with old Jack which soon made him a large fortune. But he never touched liquor again. The Broken Pledge in the frame on the wall was kept covered with black crape, and he never renewed it. The sad history of the past came up before his mind's eye every time he looked at it.

A year later old Jack married Nettie Waterman, to the surprise of everybody in the village. A dozen young men were knocked out completely when they heard of it.

It was a happy marriage, notwithstanding the difference in years of husband and wife, and now three children bless their home.

Willie married a year later, and is one of the most respected men in Redfern, though he once broke his pledge and went DOWNWARD, STEP BY STEP, to the gutter.

THE END.

Read the next number (109) of "Pluck and Luck," entitled "OLD DISASTER; OR, THE PERILS OF THE PIONEERS," by An Old Scout.

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